

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Political legacy of Malcolm X
and the Black freedom struggle
— PAGE 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 62/NO. 32 SEPTEMBER 14, 1998

Pilots' strike grounds Northwest Airlines

Machinists, flight attendants also face contract fight

BY MARY MARTIN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Some 6,000 pilots organized by the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) struck Northwest Airlines at midnight on August 28, over wages and job security. The pilots' action has grounded Northwest's fleet of 406 aircraft and caused the indefinite cancellation of 1,700 daily flights.

As we go to press, Northwest has begun laying off 27,000 workers, including mechanics, flight attendants, and customer service representatives.

Pilots set up picket lines at the company's six pilot bases in Anchorage, Detroit, Honolulu, Minneapolis, Memphis and Seattle. In Detroit, the picket lines were greeted with support from some locked out Detroit newspaper workers, and Machinists union members at Northwest.

In Minneapolis, Northwest's headquarters and main hub, where the contract negotiations were held, the pilots set up informational picket lines two hours prior to the strike deadline.

When the deadline passed, they picked up "On Strike" signs and received cheers from a small group of young people and other workers who had come out to show support, as well as sympathetic honks from passing motorists.

In their 1993 contract, the pilots, like flight attendants and ground operations

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Members of the Air Line Pilots Association picket Northwest Airlines in Detroit

Militant/Marty Ressler

Air Canada pilots walk out

BY SUSAN BERMAN

TORONTO — Air Canada pilots walked off the job at 11:59 p.m. September 1. The 2,100 members of the Air Canada Pilots Association are demanding wage increases and improved working and safety conditions.

At Toronto's Pearson International Airport, hub for more than 1,000 pilots, about 20 pickets in full uniform marched near the Air Canada desk, handing out information flyers to passengers. "We're not trying to

hold people hostage," explained picket coordinator Darryl Gunn. "We just want to get what's fair and ensure safety."

According to newspapers, 60,000 passengers were grounded the first day of the strike. Air Canada is the largest commercial airline in Canada.

Air Canada pilots earn between Can\$28,000 and \$200,000 per year (Can\$1=US\$0.70). The first two years they only receive the base salary of \$28,000.

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Russia: attempt to reimpose capitalism fuels economic misery, political turmoil

Workers' resistance worries Yeltsin and imperialists

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The attempts to reimpose capitalism in Russia by the proimperialist regime of President Boris Yeltsin has wrought economic

turmoil while edging the country towards the brink of a social explosion. Washington and its imperialist allies in Bonn, London and Paris are alarmed at the escalating

struggles by coal miners, teachers, and other working people against the effects of Yeltsin's "market reforms." This working-class resistance to the attempts to sweep away the remaining gains of the October 1917 Bolshevik revolution has also exacerbated political instability in Moscow.

On August 17, one month after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) concluded a \$17 billion loan agreement, Moscow announced that it will default on some of its debts and devalued its currency. The move included a 90-day moratorium on payments of foreign debts owed mostly by banks, restructuring government bonds, and allowing the currency to drop from 6.4 to 9.5 rubles against the dollar.

On September 1, during the state visit of U.S. president William Clinton, Yeltsin said that his government might make "tactical changes" to increase state control of the economy. Five days earlier the Russian parliament had also made public a program it adopted calling for increasing state control over the economy, including the nationalization of strategic industries that had been

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Seattle youth rally for affirmative action

BY ALARIC DIRMEYER

SEATTLE — Chanting "When you say rollback, we say fight back," close to 300 people gathered at Garfield High School August 29 for a march and rally in support of affirmative action. The demonstrators were speaking out against Initiative 200 (I-200), a proposal on the ballot in Washington state that seeks to eliminate affirmative action programs in higher education and government jobs and contracts.

The action, the first in several months after a lull in activity, was organized by various political and community groups to rally support for voting down I-200. Organizers included the African American Coalition for Equity and the Martin Luther King Committee. Youth, especially Black youth, com-

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Join the Young Socialists!

The handful of billionaire families who rule the United States are responding to the long-term decline of their profit system by attacking living and working conditions of work-

EDITORIAL

ing people around the world. Washington proclaims itself the "indispensable nation" to justify acts of imperial aggression, from the bombing of Afghanistan and Sudan to the slowly tightening military encirclement of Russia. At home, the bosses push for

Continued on Page 14

Washington's pretext for bombing is fading fast

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Washington's rationalizations for its cruise missile assault on a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan and on several sites in southern Afghanistan are increasingly being exposed. The facts that have begun to come to light reveal that the bombings — carried out in the name of "fighting terrorism" — were calculated acts of imperial aggression.

At the same time, U.S. officials are gearing up for a show trial in New York of two men they have accused of involvement in the August 7 bombing of the U.S. embassy in Kenya.

The Clinton administration is particularly

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New International: A MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY

In no. 11

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

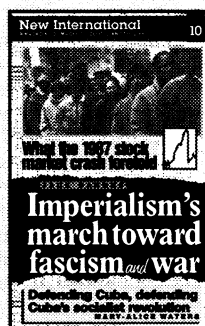
Socialist Workers Party Resolution (see ad on page 8)

In no. 10

Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War

JACK BARNES

How the working class and its allies respond to the accelerated capitalist disorder will determine whether or not imperialism's march toward fascism and war can be stopped. Available in English, French, Spanish, Swedish \$14.00



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London moves to restrict rights in Ireland, Britain — page 14

Indonesia: 5,000 miners strike

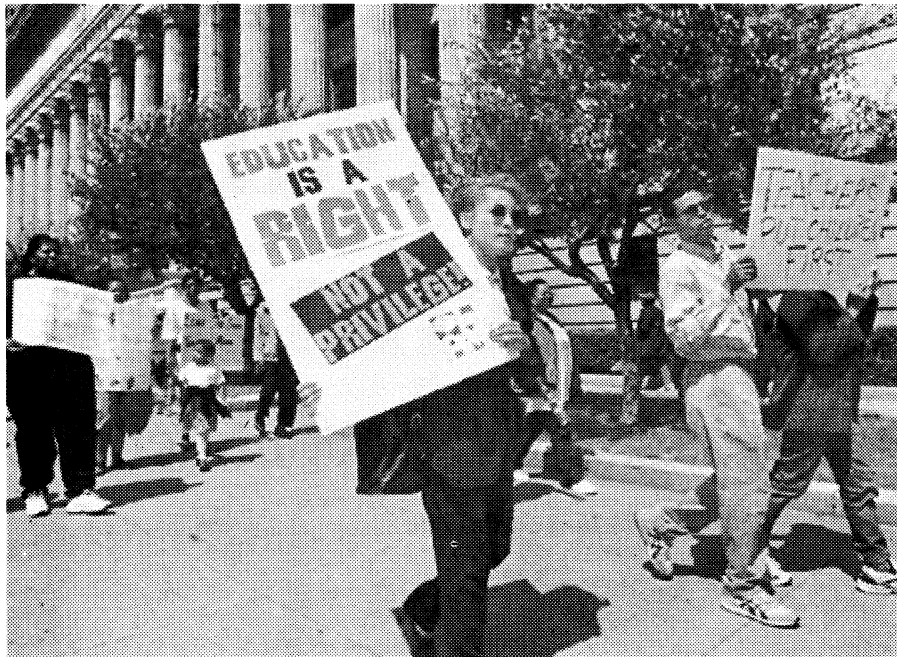
Some 5,000 workers at the Freeport-McMoRan Copper and Gold mine in Indonesia staged a three-day strike in mid-August, after the U.S. company reneged on promises to increase wages. The company denies it ever agreed to a pay raise. There have been many other protests by workers and farmers against the impact of the deepening economic crisis in Indonesia. Hundreds of peasants attacked a government-owned palm plantation August 26 in Deli Serdang in north Sumatra. They were protesting the arrest of three peasants who had allegedly stolen a truckload of fruit. Deli Serdang is just outside Medan, one of the cities where workers and peasants rebelled last May over staggering increases in food prices. Police also recently attacked peasants who broke into four rice mills in Bondowoso, Java, arresting 40 people. The next day hundreds of people protested the attack.

Malaysia enters official recession

Malaysia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) shrank 6.8 percent for the second consecutive quarter in April-June. A country's economy is officially in recession when the GDP, the measurement of output of goods and services, falls for two consecutive quarters. This is the first recession in Malaysia in 13 years. Farm production shrank by 9.6 percent, manufacturing output contracted 9.2 percent, construction plummeted 22 percent, and mining also dipped. Since the currency crisis that rocked Asia about a year ago, the Malaysian currency, the ringgit, has declined by one-third against the U.S. dollar.

Hyundai workers end strike

A month-long strike at Hyundai Motors, south Korea's largest automaker, ended August 24 with the company being forced to severely scale back its layoff plans. Some 5,000 workers and their families had occupied five Hyundai plants since July 20 to protest the projected layoff of 4,800 workers. The company estimates it lost nearly \$700 million during the strike. The agreement between the union and Hyundai allows the company to lay off 277 workers, and put



Teachers, students, and parents protested in Albany, New York, August 19, over the firing of teachers who have allegedly failed certification tests. Most of the teachers are Black or Latino.

a further 1,261 workers who earlier received dismissal notices on an 18-month unpaid leave. Other bosses in south Korea now claim they may attempt to cut jobs, following Hyundai's lead. Meanwhile, south Korea's recession deepened in the second quarter, as its GDP dropped at an annual rate of 6.6 percent. And unemployment stood at 7.6 percent in July — triple of what it was a year earlier.

Unemployment remains "extremely severe" in Japan

Tokyo announced August 28 that, for the sixth consecutive month, the overall number of people employed in Japan declined from a year ago. The official jobless rate dipped slightly to 4.1 percent. Anyone who has worked one hour or more in the month is considered "employed." The hardest hit are men between the ages of 15 and 24, with an unemployment rate of nearly 8 percent. A report by the government's Management and Coordination Agency called the unem-

ployment "extremely severe."

Australia: Asian immigration cut

The Australian government said August 25 that it would cut the number of immigrants granted refugee status from southern and southeastern Asia from 685 to 180 this year, and increase the number from Europe, including 12,000 from Yugoslavia. Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said the shift in origins had nothing to do with pressure from ultrarightist Pauline Hanson, who has demagogically declared that Australia is being "swamped by Asians."

Miners and airline workers strike in South Africa

Members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) of South Africa have been on strike at the state-owned Alexkor diamond mine since August 24. Unionists' demands include better working conditions and the dismissal of two senior managers. Meanwhile, thousands of ground workers, cabin crew, and technical maintenance workers went on strike at SA Airways August 27. Workers are organized into the SA Railway and Harbours Workers' Union (Sarhuw) and the airport union Salstaff. The strike was sparked after pilots were awarded a 17 percent raise, while other workers were offered a 7.5 percent wage increase. Both the Alexkor mine and SA Airways are scheduled for privatization.

Niger: teachers threaten strike

The National Union of Basic Education Teachers of Niger is threatening to strike at the start of the school term October 1 unless the government fails to meet their demands, which include the payment of back wages,

opening negotiations on stalled entitlements and family benefits, and regularization of newly hired teachers. Workers in Niger are currently owed between seven and eight months in back wages.

Tel Aviv builds settlements, imposes curfew, builds wall

Tel Aviv imposed a round-the-clock curfew on 30,000 Palestinians living in the Israeli-controlled city center of Hebron, West Bank, August 20, after a rabbi was killed there. When settlers repeatedly stoned and beat Palestinian schoolchildren during a brief lifting of the curfew August 27, dozens of youth responded by throwing stones at Israeli soldiers. Riot troops then fired a stun grenade at the protesters. That same day, the Israeli government announced it would give the go-ahead for 132 new housing units for settlers in predominantly Arab East Jerusalem. The Palestinian Authority said it would "will confront this with all means."

Meanwhile, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the government would build a multi-million dollar discontinuous wall separating Israel and the West Bank, supposedly to prevent car theft. Tel Aviv annexed the territory, seizing it from Jordan in 1967.

Volkswagen workers in Mexico win 21 percent wage hike

After 10,000 workers at a Volkswagen plant in Mexico were set to strike in mid-August, the company backed down, conceding a 21 percent increase in wages and an increase in benefits. The factory is Volkswagen's largest North American plant.

Black enrollment down in South

According to a report issued by the Southern Education Foundation, the percentage of Black students in the South enrolling in college is declining, and the likelihood of graduating is no better than it was when the civil rights movement succeeded in desegregating universities in the region decades ago. Although Blacks make up 20 percent of the college-age population, only 10 percent receive bachelor's degrees, while whites constitute 68 percent of the population and make up 80 percent of the graduates.

KKK leader convicted of murder

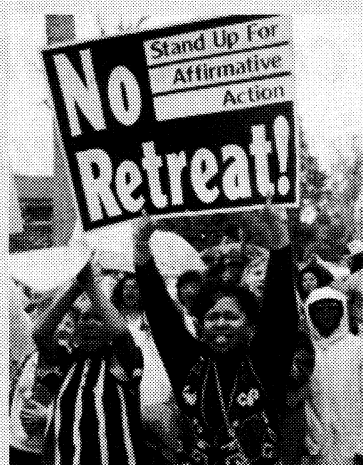
After almost 33 years, Sam Bowers, a former Ku Klux Klan Imperial Wizard, was convicted of murder for ordering the firebombing of Vernon Dahmer's house. Dahmer, who died from the fire, had been a local official with the NAACP and was singled out by the KKK for allowing his store to be used as a place for Blacks to pay the \$2 poll tax that was required for voter registration. Bowers had previously walked free after four mistrials, including two state murder trials in the 1960s, after all-white juries were deadlocked. This time, he was sentenced to life in prison.

— MEGAN ARNEY

THE MILITANT

Fight for Black freedom

From the struggle for affirmative action to the labor resistance unfolding today to protesting police brutality, Black workers and youth will be in the vanguard of the next American revolution. The 'Militant' points to these struggles and fighters who will put together new organizations that will fight for the interests of the Black masses. Don't miss a single issue!



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Editor: NAOMI CRAINE

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Megan Arney, Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Argiris Malapanis, Brian Taylor, and Maurice Williams.

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Hundreds rally to back farm workers' strike

BY FRANCISCO RIVERA

SALINAS, California — Some 600 members and supporters of the United Farm Workers (UFW) marched in this city August 9 demanding a union contract for the 900 employees of D'Arrigo Bros., a large vegetable grower in California. "Huelga, huelga," (strike!) chanted the workers and their families throughout a section of east Salinas. "We want health care, we want a pension plan," they also demanded. The next day they went on strike.

The workers at D'Arrigo voted to join the UFW in 1975, but have been unable to get a contract from the owners in the past 23 years. The walkout ended August 28.

"Join us. Join the march!" farm workers called out to people in this proletarian community. Many did pick up the UFW flags — a black eagle on red background — and joined the action.

One of those joining was Francisco Lara, 72, who was an active member of the UFW during the battles that founded the union in the 1960s and worked for 20 years at the Sun Harvest Co. before retiring. Jesús Bernal, also a local resident and UFW supporter, commented that it is "noticeable that there is more willingness to get involved" in labor struggles today.

In addition to a large contingent of D'Arrigo Bros. workers, there were grape pickers from the J&L company who recently got their contract renewed, as well as mushroom pickers from a couple of different farms.

There was also a sizable contingent of workers from the Coastal Berry Farms, currently fighting a battle for union representation despite the violent attacks of a pro-company outfit call the Coastal Berry Organizing Committee. After the march, representatives of workers from various farms express solidarity with the D'Arrigo strikers.

Longtime UFW leader Dolores Huerta told participants that the struggle at D'Arrigo was a fight "for all farm workers in this valley."

María Ramírez and Apolonia Jiménez, who have been picking iceberg lettuce at the D'Arrigo farm in Salinas for three and five years respectively, described some of the working conditions at the farm. "Although the sanitary conditions are a little better, the company still does not give us gloves to work," said Ramírez. "When it rains they give us a trash bag that doesn't cover our whole bodies and when it stops raining, they take the trash bag back, can you believe it?"

"More importantly," said Jiménez, "we are not getting paid for overtime after eight hours of work," unlike the pickers of other produce on the same farm.

Company moves to cut wages

Arturo Jiménez, a young mustard greens picker at D'Arrigo for the past three years, has worked on different farms in the Salinas Valley for the past decade. Jiménez travels every year between Jalisco, Mexico, and Salinas, California. "The company has been taking more than what it use to," he said. "Years ago the lettuce pickers used to get paid more than \$3 a box with a guaranteed minimum of \$7 an hour. Now they pay \$2.70 per box, and the guaranteed minimum is only \$6 dollars an hour." On top of that, now the lettuce has to be bunched as it is picked, an operation that had been done separately by other workers.

Rodrigo Ceja, another mustard picker at D'Arrigo for the past five years told the *Militant* how the latest round of the fight for a contract broke out. "The company introduced 'U-2' machines to pick the mustard [greens] for the first time. We were willing to experiment for a while to negotiate a price, given the change." The "U-2" is a conveyor belt that drives along the edge of the edge of the field where the workers place the boxes of picked produce. In the case of lettuce, it takes 25 experienced workers to keep the machine busy, and some 40 workers in the case of the mustard greens. In addition, one worker operates the machine and a loader places the packed produce on the shipping truck.

"Now the company wants us to pay for the wages of the operator and the loader," explained Jiménez.

"Instead of getting paid for the boxes that one picks, the company wants to divide the total of what is picked, packed, and loaded equally among everyone, operator, and loader included."



Farm workers and supporters march through Salinas, California, August 9.

Strikers say: 'support our fight'

Jiménez said the entire workforce at D'Arrigo staged a two-day walkout starting August 5, but bosses told the mustard green pickers that they were fired. D'Arrigo Bros. bosses started hiring independent contractors to bring in workers to handle all the crops. The unionists protested and demanded that the company sit down and negotiate a contract. They have been explaining their struggle to the workers brought by the contractors, and asking them to join the fight.

On August 10, some 250 workers organized contingents at every entrance of a lettuce field of D'Arrigo Bros. in Salinas. By 5:30 a.m. red and black UFW flags were flying along the public road closest to the field. A large contingent of farm workers called on workers that had been bused in by a contractor to come out and join the fight. The 45 or so scabs had been brought in with the help of about a dozen members of the local Sheriff department.

Once off the buses, a discussion broke out among the workers in the field and 20 min-

Sweden: Communist League issues campaign manifesto against imperialism

Below we reprint the election manifesto issued by the Communist League in Sweden under the title, "The Communist League in the Elections 1998 — A campaign against imperialism and war."

- Defend democratic rights
- Shorten the workweek
- Affirmative action
- Cancel the Third World debt
- Defend the Cuban Revolution

The Communist League is running a national slate of candidates in the September 20 elections for parliament, the county elections in Stockholm, and the municipal elections in Stockholm, Södertälje, and Järfälla. Where the league does not have candidates it is calling for a vote for the Social Democrats or the Left party.

Against imperialism and war

The worldwide capitalist system is in a deep economic crisis that today is ravaging Japan and what had been called the "tiger economies" in Asia, with devastating effects on millions of toilers. In the coming period this crisis will also bloom in Europe. The capitalists who rule Sweden, Germany, Japan, the United States, and the other imperialist states are increasingly driven to attack workers' wages and expectations in order to reverse this crisis and salvage their profit system. The attempts today by the wealthy rulers across the European continent to roll back the social gains conquered by working people over decades are a harbinger of what is coming.

In addition to trying to squeeze more from the working class at home, the finance capitalists hope to restore capitalism in Russia and the Eastern European workers states, and once again open that part of the world for them to exploit. But as workers across Russia paralyze mining, transport, and other industries demanding their paychecks, it becomes clearer that capitalist rule will only be reimposed by military means. That is why the Clinton administration is pushing the extension of NATO to the regimes in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary now and the Baltic states, Finland, and Sweden down the road. The NATO-led occupation of Yugoslavia is an important step toward the encirclement of Russia. The same is true of the U.S.-led aggression against Iraq and moves to establish Washington's hegemony in the area around the Caspian Sea.

This encirclement of Russia is aimed at strengthening the imperialists' positions for

the day when they will be forced to not just send debt collection notices, but move militarily to break up the social relations formed by the 1917 Russian revolution. These social relations are still an obstacle for capitalist exploitation of the workers and natural resources in a huge part of the world, stretching from eastern Germany to the former Soviet republics, China, and north Korea.

The Swedish finance capitalists and their governments during the 1990s — both Social Democratic and Conservative — have been deeply involved in this encirclement of Russia. They play a leading role in the Baltic Sea area to prepare the road for membership in the European Union and NATO for the Baltic states. For them the question of a Swedish membership in NATO is not a question of if but when.

The decline in profit rates is once again fueling rivalries among the big imperialist powers over their prerogatives in exploiting the labor of working people the world over. Paris in particular is trying to take the lead in the European Union against Washington. As these contradictions grow, and as more virulent rightist forces come to the fore, the question of war between Washington, Bonn, Paris, London, and Tokyo will be again posed to humanity — if the working class does not stop them by taking power. In such a showdown smaller imperialist countries like Sweden will be drawn in to one or the other side.

The Communist League is against any country joining imperialist war pacts like NATO or imperialist economic and trade pacts like the European Union. Therefore we demand that the Swedish government leave the European Union and that NATO and the EU be dissolved.

Defend rights — strengthen solidarity

The capitalist rulers' desperate attempts to buoy their sinking profits also explains the extensive attacks on democratic and social rights and the growth of right-wing currents in politics in every single imperialist country in the 1990s.

The finance capitalists and their governments try to break down human solidarity and limit the possibilities for working people to fight back these attacks. The right to asylum, the right to demonstrate, the right to strike, and freedom of the press are restricted. Social rights like unemployment benefits, sick leave, and pensions are being cut.

These attacks open up space for extra

utes later a contingent of 25 workers came out to the cheers and warm reception of the unionists. Another 15 came out a little while later, despite the intimidating efforts of supervisors, who drove around the field in the company's white trucks.

The remaining five workers came out a little later when it became clear there was not going to be much happening in that field that morning. They got just as warm a reception from the pickets as the first groups.

Scouts arrived shortly to report that there was not much production at other D'Arrigo fields that morning.

The strikers left a contingent at the lettuce field, since it was still early in the day. Other unionists drove the workers who walked out to their cars, and many more were organized to picket other D'Arrigo fields.

In a phone interview, Rodrigo Ceja said that five workers were arrested by the sheriff's department on August 11, bringing the total arrested to 12 by that date. He also reported that the D'Arrigo management was successful in getting a court injunction that allow them to limit the number of pickets to 15 at the entrance of the field, and would only allow the UFW to contact workers in the company's fields during their breaks, in a ratio of one unionist to every 15 workers on a field.

UFW officials announced August 27 that they would end the walkout the next day as a sign of sympathy for the D'Arrigo family following the death of one of the bosses in an auto accident.

Contract negotiations are now scheduled to resume September 23.

parliamentary campaigns from the ultraright demanding further limits on the rights for immigrants or cynically using the pretext of child pornography to give the police the arbitrary right to search homes. This in turn paves the way for the incipient fascist forces that today physically attack immigrants, gays, and cultural expressions they dub as "decadent," but will later especially target the basic organizations of the working class—the trade unions—and try to smash them. In France, Italy, and Austria incipient fascist movements with Bonapartist leaders like Le Pen, Fini, and Haider already play a big role in bourgeois politics, while in Germany and Sweden this development is at an earlier stage.

But working people are also increasingly putting up resistance to the attacks on their rights.

The Communist League defends these rights and demands their extension. We demand that the borders be opened for all refugees. We demand the cancellation of the Third World debt, to unite workers in imperialist countries with those facing the worst of the economic crises today in the semicolonial world. Against nationalism and racism, we put forward internationalism.

The most fundamental division among wage-workers is between the employed and the unemployed. That is why it is important to demand legislation for the six-hour workday with no cut in pay and that the government launch a program for public works, to increase jobs. To counter the discrimination of women and immigrants, we propose the labor movement fight for affirmative action with quotas in education and hiring.

Defend the Cuban Revolution

To stop the world's finance capitalists from dragging the world into a devastating third world war, workers and farmers in every country must take the power from these warmongers and create their own government — a workers and farmers government.

Working people formed such a government in Cuba after the revolutionary victory over the Batista dictatorship in 1959 — a government that sides with the workers and farmers, not only in Cuba but all over the world. The socialist revolution in Cuba is alive and still fighting 40 years later. The Communist League defends this victory for workers and farmers all over the world. The Cuban revolution is an example to emulate in the coming class battles.

US West strikers push back concessions

BY BECKY ELLIS

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — Some 34,000 members of the Communication Workers of America (CWA) began returning to work August 31 after a two-week strike against US West. Discussions began immediately about the terms of the tentative agreement with the phone giant, which union negotiators reached late the night before.

Two of the most vicious proposals by the company were pushed back through the determination of the strikers and the public support that was beginning to develop for their fight. The massive amounts of mandatory overtime that the company has imposed over the past couple of years will be reduced to a maximum of eight hours a week by the end of the three-year contract. Many technicians have been working 70-hour weeks, and some up to 100 hours. Repair operators have been working between 50 and 60 hours a week.

Premium pay for overtime will remain in place. The company had pushed for doing away with the current time-and-a-half rate for over eight hours in a day and double-time rate for over 49 hours in a week.

The company's "pay for performance" plan, a kind of piece work system that the bosses wanted to make mandatory, will be voluntary for current workers, transfers, and new hires. The company agreed not to implement the plan until at least July 1999. A similar plan was introduced into the contract three years ago for sales consultants.

The company was able to get a new health-care plan that may require some workers to pay between \$800 and \$1,000 a year to remain with their current doctors. Management now will also have the right to secretly monitor workers' customer calls, which was not allowed under the expired contract.

Pay raises totaling about 11 percent over three years, an increase in pensions and retirement fund contributions, and a \$500 signing bonus are also included in the agreement. CWA members will be voting on the proposed contract sometime after Labor Day.

Workers face down company threats

During the second week of the strike, the company announced it was canceling health benefits for the strikers. Each striker was sent a letter from the company complaining

that union negotiators were stalling. "If I were a picketer, I would be extremely upset that I had spent hours walking the picket line, while at the same time my union reps at the bargaining table were satisfied with meeting only 65 minutes a week," the bosses said. These scare tactics didn't work. Very few workers crossed the picket line.

US West spokespeople tried to blame supposed vandalism by strikers for the death of a baby in Colorado August 27. The child's parents were unable to dial the emergency number 911. US West spokesman David Beigie said, "We've been warning the community that acts of vandalism could result in tragedy."

Carla West, spokeswoman for Denver's CWA local 7777 said, "We did notify the company just Wednesday [August 26] that in the event of an emergency, such as a 911 outage, the company could contact us and we would dispatch people to do repairs on any emergency services." It was determined that the 911 service had been disabled when a construction crew had cut a cable.

Rallies and mass pickets boosted morale in many cities throughout the two-week strike. At a rally in Des Moines August 26, the president of CWA Local 7102, Sarah Downing, noted, "The strike is solid. All the trainees are out with us, including one who was only on the job three days." She said support had come from Teamsters at UPS, postal workers, and locals of the United Steelworkers of America at Bridgestone/Firestone and Titan Tire. The Titan workers have been on strike since May 1.

In Seattle, strikers rallied August 29 at the CWA Local 7800 hall. Workers from other unions including the Service Employees International Union, Teamsters, International Longshore Workers Union, United Transportation Union, and International Association of Machinists came to express their support for the strikers. The rally was followed by a march of 800. Strikers were wearing t-shirts that said "Life's Bitter Here," mocking the company's "Life's Better Here" slogan.

This reporter, a repair operator in St. Paul returned to the phones not looking forward to hearing from customers who have been told their service will be delayed. But I and my co-workers found that many customers were very glad to talk to the returning strikers — explaining in many cases they were



Militant/Lisa Ahlberg

About 900 Communication Workers of America members at US West march and rally at Bell Plaza—U.S. West building in Seattle, Washington, August 23.

glad to be patient because they supported the strike.

Workers debate contract offer

The tentative contract is a big topic of discussion at work. Many repairs operators in St. Paul are unhappy with what they know about the deal. Keith Baker, who has worked for US West for a year, said, "We got nothing. While the overtime might get better for techs who work so many hours, in this department we work 8 to 10 hours of overtime a week, so it won't be better for us."

One young woman who asked that her name not be used was concerned about the health care proposal. "I'm in no position to start changing doctors and can't afford the extra \$900 this might cost me," she said. "We should go back out on strike!"

Judy Nelson, who has worked for the company many years, didn't like coming back to work without knowing exactly what the new contract will say. "I'm very unhappy about changes in the health care. And although the pay for performance will be vol-

untary, some will choose to do it and race through calls, and the rest of us will have to wipe up the mess it will create."

In Des Moines, Greg Greenwood, 26, who has worked in repairs for seven years and is a third-generation phone company worker, was pleased with many parts of the offer, but said, "I hope the contract gets defeated because of the pay for performance. It is supposed to be voluntary, but if they get a foothold, they'll try to make it mandatory and try to make the new people do it."

To Bob Peters, a shop steward in Des Moines and a veteran of the strike against Bridgestone/Firestone, the two most important achievements of the strike were pushing back the demands for eliminating premium pay for overtime and winning union recognition for a new US West center in Pocatello, Idaho.

Becky Ellis is a member of CWA Local 7201. Lief Gutthiudschmitt in Seattle and Tim Mailhot and Maggie Trowe in Des Moines contributed to this article.

Stage workers strike for benefits at theater in Harlem

BY AL DUNCAN
AND BRIAN TAYLOR

NEW YORK — Thirty-four stage workers, members of the newly formed Local One of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) struck the Apollo Theater August 24 here in Harlem. Members of IATSE provide the sound, lighting, props, and other related tasks that are necessary for the various shows that take place at the theater. Workers are demanding decent wages, health-care benefits, and a pension plan.

Stage workers on the picket line commented that they joined the IATSE in order to have a stronger way to fight for their demands. "We haven't had a raise in 10 years,"

said Mike Jenkins, who is 35 and has worked at the Apollo for a decade. Bart Degong, 39, who has worked at the Apollo for two years, told the *Militant* that he wanted to be paid overtime after eight hours of work, which is currently not the case.

At the onset of the strike the predominantly Black workforce threw up pickets in front of the Apollo. The lines, which are set up 24 hours a day, drew support from several other IATSE locals in the city. At first, strikers said, the pickets tended to divide into groups of Black and white strikers. One striker explained that some of the Black workers decided to organize a barbecue for everyone, which helped break this down.

Unionists have received an extremely

good response from the majority of the community, handing out hundreds of leaflets every day and convincing some to help with leafleting. Strikers have received material donations from local stores.

Not all passersby, however, support the strike. An occasional person raises that Rep. Charles Rangel, who is Black, is the CEO of the Apollo Theater Foundation, and that Black workers should support the Black boss, not strike the company alongside white union representatives. "But we are Black too," said one picket, pointing out that it is he, not Rangel who is struggling to live with no benefits.

Charles Richardson, an audio technician said that Rangel "speaks of a family envi-

ronment between management and employees.... He says he's for the union. He says we should have had a union here a long time ago. But when it came time to talk about the contract proposal, he had no desire to talk about it." Another striker explained that most of those who are initially hostile to the strike quickly change their tune if they are willing to hear what the fight is about.

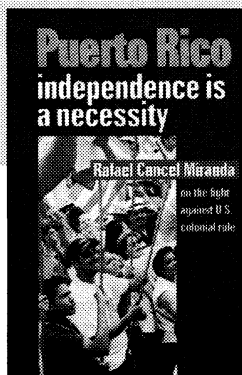
Strikers are asking that other unions and members of the Harlem community call Charles Rangel and demand that he urge the theater to settle with the strikers right away.

Al Duncan is a member of the United Transportation Union and the Socialist Workers candidate for governor of New York.

New this month from Pathfinder

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Washington, Tokyo step up aggression against n. Korea

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Japanese government announced September 1 that it was suspending discussions on establishing diplomatic relations with north Korea, as well as halting food aid to the country. Tokyo is backing away from a 1994 accord under which it pledged \$1 billion toward a project to build two light-water nuclear power plants in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Under the accord, the DPRK agreed to allow international inspection of its nuclear facilities in exchange for the two power plants and a promise by the U.S. government to provide billions of dollars in humanitarian aid. The agreement also include

a framework calling for Washington to lift the economic sanctions it has imposed on the Korean people and delivering 500,000 metric tons of fuel oil to north Korea until the two power plants have been constructed.

The Japanese government made its announcement the day after Pyongyang launched a two-stage ballistic missile across Japan and several days after Washington claimed the DPRK was secretly building an underground nuclear facility.

Clinton administration officials admitted that no construction had begun on the supposed plant. Meanwhile, Tokyo stated that it would continue to research a ballistic missile project proposed by Washington.

'Militant' to launch subscription drive to win new readers

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are preparing to launch an eight-week campaign to sign up new readers to the socialist press. The drive begins September 12 and ends November 4 and will also include selling copies of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. The goals for the campaign will be printed in the next issue of the *Militant*.

Participants in the sales drive plan to reach out to working-class fighters and respond to struggles breaking out across the United States, Canada, Sweden, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and other parts of the world. Socialist workers, members of the Young Socialists, and other supporters of the campaign will participate in activities over the Labor Day weekend to warm up for the sales drive.

Samantha Kern and Alaric Dirmeyer, are two members of the Young Socialists in San Francisco who have joined sales teams to build the September 5-6 regional conference there. Dirmeyer said over the past week they have sold more than 90 copies of the *Militant* while building the event.

"We had teams setting up literature tables at City College here, Mills College in Oakland, and UCLA at Berkeley," said Dirmeyer. "We plan to go to San Jose later. At City College of San Francisco 650 members of Service Employees International Union Local 790 are waging a strike after going 14 months without a contract. We joined their pickets which are up from 7:00 a.m. until evening time."

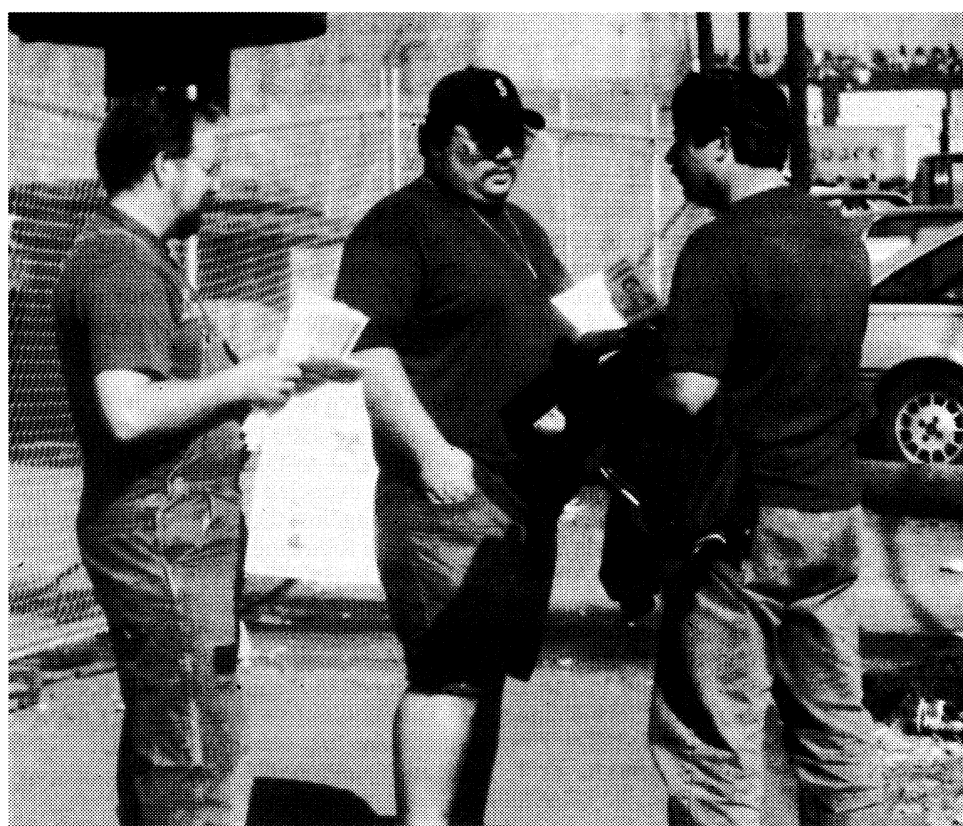
"We sold a *Militant* subscription to a stu-

dent who wants to find out more about the U.S. bombing of Sudan and Afghanistan," said Kern, who had just come back from selling socialist literature at Mills college. "Many students were impressed that the articles in the *Militant* were written by workers and students. We sold three copies of the *Militant*, two subscriptions, a copy of the *Communist Manifesto* and a copy of *Women's Evolution*. One of the subscriptions was bought by a construction worker who stopped by on his break. He asked for books by communist leader Karl Marx and when we showed him the *Communist Manifesto* he said, 'That's perfect.'"

The two YS members said some of the other activities they were planning included a preconference dinner for people interested in learning more about the conference.

"I sold a subscription to the *Militant*, a copy of *New Internationalist* no. 4 and a copy of the pamphlet *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s* to a farmer from a small town in Georgia," said Ardy Blandford, who participated in the 31st Annual Meeting of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives in Epps, Alabama.

Ved Dookhun, another *Militant* supporter at the farmers meeting said, "Many farmers were interested in learning more about the struggle for a workers and farmers government, which was reflected in our selling four copies of *NI* no. 4 and three copies of the Pathfinder pamphlet *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s*. We also sold eight other Pathfinder titles and 12 *Militants*." Below we are printing excerpts from results of sales in Australia.



Militant/John Naubert

Selling the *Militant* in August outside the Todd Shipyard in Seattle

BY BOB AIKEN

SYDNEY, Australia — We sold 45 copies of the *Militant* last week, including 25 on the job (plus five back issues), at plant gates, and on picket lines. This includes 10 copies at four plants where supporters of the *Militant* work, and six copies at a plant gate sale at the CTAL wharf at port Botany.

We sold ten copies during two visits to the picket lines at the David's grocery store depot at Blacktown. Workers there ended an eight-week strike August 28 after they won the reinstatement of 54 workers sacked for "gross misconduct" on the picket line. We went to a solidarity rally on the picket line that day along with wharfies from New-

castle, Sydney, and Wollongong, The David's workers who are members of the National Union of Workers, don't have a contract yet, but the company's union-busting drive has taken a blow. We also sold four copies and a subscription to the *Militant* at a picket line by workers at Telstra, the main communications company, who were on a 48-hour protest strike over concessions Telstra is demanding in current contract negotiations.

We will also send a team to far west of New South Wales, as part of the Communist League election campaign, to participate in a ceremony to hand the title of a national park area back to the traditional Aboriginal owners. This is the culmination of a 15-year fight for land rights.

Volunteers digitize first Pathfinder book cover-to-cover

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Malcolm X on Afro-American History, the first book to be prepared in electronic format by volunteers in its entirety — from cover to text and internal graphics, is on the presses in Pathfinder's print shop.

"That's something worth celebrating," said Greg Sack in a September 3 telephone interview from his home in Cincinnati. "It's quite an amazing feat, something we couldn't have imagined was possible five years ago," he added, referring to the international effort to put into digital form the entire back list of 350 titles Pathfinder Press publishes or is responsible for keeping in print and distributing. "Developments in both politics

and technology have made this possible," Sack added. "Because of the new kind of resistance by working people in this country and around the world to the effects of a capitalism system in deep crisis, which more and more people see, a lot of supporters of the Socialist Workers Party like myself who had drifted off from activity for a while have come back to the party and are looking for ways to advance the struggle."

Greg Sack, who has been working in the graphics arts industry for about 30 years, is part of a team of volunteers digitizing the covers and internal graphics of Pathfinder books. It took him and his wife Bobbi Sack about 45 hours to manipulate the digital files

of photos, lay out the pages, produce high quality proofs, and correct errors. "We were careful with quality control," Greg Sack said, "though we still have to absorb the lessons of our first book."

Nearly 150 supporters of the communist movement around the world, organized by the Pathfinder Volunteer Steering Committee in the San Francisco Bay Area, are involved in the endeavor to digitize Pathfinder's arsenal of revolutionary literature. This has already made it possible to reduce the staff in Pathfinder's print shop by nine workers by virtually eliminating highly skilled and labor-consuming processes such as stripping film — enabling the publisher to keep its back list in print with less labor and at a lower cost for short runs.

Print shop workers are using the digital files of the books prepared by volunteers to produce film flats, through a recently acquired upgraded imagesetter, which are then used to burn printing plates. This step will also be bypassed when the shop acquires computer-to-plate technology that makes possible the production of plates directly from the electronic files. A capital fund has been launched to get this equipment, and \$235,000 has been raised so far. (For donations to raise the additional several hundred thousand dollars needed write Pathfinder at 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.)

Greg Sack stressed that much of the effort spent in digitizing the cover and illustrations of the book by Malcolm X was a one-time expenditure of labor time to work out the kinks and set proper procedures and quality controls. "We believe our efficiency rate will go up precipitously as our organizing efforts gel," he said. "We are, after all, simultaneously setting up a whole new brigade of people digitizing graphics."

The Sacks worked through the Internet with another team of volunteers based in New York, organized by Mike Shur and Arthur Hughes, who have taken on the responsibility of organizing the production flow of digitizing the graphics for Pathfinder's back list. Shur scanned the art work for the cover and 23 illustrations inside *Malcolm X on Afro-American History* and sent the original files by e-mail to the Sacks. Many other volunteers in several cities scanned, proofread, corrected, and formatted the text of the book.

Members of the Young Socialists, the SWP, and other supporters and friends of the communist movement from a dozen cities in North America are volunteering for a Red Weekend at the Pathfinder building in New York September 6-7 to prepare materials needed by those digitizing covers and internal photos of Pathfinder books.

Red Weekend at Pathfinder building

More than 50 volunteers will assemble, carefully clean, and catalogue film with photos and other art work used in the 350 titles on Pathfinder's back list. These materials are now pasted on 5,000 film flats that will be disassembled over the weekend and prepared to be sent to the volunteer digitizers as they need them. Some of the supporters of the communist movement involved in digitizing Pathfinder books are also coming to help with the tasks at hand.

A couple of dozen of those participating in the Red Weekend will also clean up salt residues from the inside of the east wall of the building that houses Pathfinder's editorial facilities and print shop. That wall, which had been leaking every time it rained, was repaired this summer and is now sealed off from water penetration. Volunteers will also clean up and organize the tools and maintenance area in the basement of the building.

These steps will help maintain the structural soundness of the Pathfinder building, and improve the appearance of the physical plant and working conditions in the editorial and other production departments.

Many of those coming to join the volunteer effort will also have a chance to participate in political and social activities during the Labor Day weekend.

These include the Million Youth March in New York on September 5, a Militant Labor Forum in Brooklyn that night titled "Washington is the world's number one terrorist; speak out against the U.S. bombings of Sudan and Afghanistan," a class on the vanguard role of the Black nationality in the coming American revolution sponsored by the New York Young Socialists and SWP at the Brooklyn Pathfinder bookstore at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 6, and the Caribbean Day festival in Brooklyn the next day.

Anyone who would like to participate in the Red Weekend can contact Pathfinder supporters in your area, listed on page 12.

Socialist Workers candidates will be on New York ballot

BY OLGA RODRIGUEZ

NEW YORK — Socialist Workers candidates for statewide office held a news conference in front of City Hall August 31 to announce that they will be on the ballot in November, at the same time condemning the city's crackdown on democratic rights.

The candidates and their campaign supporters had obtained permission from city authorities to hold a press conference on the steps of City Hall, but were then informed that because of "heightened security," the candidates would have to move outside the concrete barricades surrounding City Hall and its grounds, and would not be allowed in the building.

The barriers, manned by city cops, went up in front of City Hall, the Federal court building and other government offices after U.S. authorities accused two young men of taking part in the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and kidnapped them from abroad, bringing them to New York where they sit in prison awaiting a trial.

"We believe that the city administration is using the so-called terrorist threat to intimidate those who would stand up and fight the capitalist offensive against working people," said Al Duncan, a railworker at Conrail and member of the United Transportation Union (UTU), and Socialist Workers candidate for governor of New York. Duncan

explained that the attack on democratic rights was similar to the assault by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani on the Million Youth March, which Giuliani has called a dangerous "hate march," and on protesting cab drivers several months earlier, whom the mayor referred to as "taxi terrorists."

Reporters from *New York Newsday*, *Daily News*, and the *New York Post* interviewed Duncan; Ruth Robinett, a member of the UTU at Amtrak and Socialist Workers candidate for lieutenant governor; and Rose Ana Berbeo, a baggage handler and member of the International Association of Machinists at Northwest Airlines who is the SWP candidate for U.S. Senate. All three will be on the ballot in the November 3 election.

An article in the *New York Post* the next day about the ban on gatherings at City Hall included two paragraphs quoting Duncan. The article said that "Al Duncan, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for governor, wasn't as sanguine" as one of the Democratic candidates about the blocking of using City Hall for news conferences. The article continued, "Asked if the bombings of U.S. facilities overseas wasn't real, Duncan responded, 'We believe the No. 1 terrorist in the world is the U.S.'"

Newsday and the *Daily News* also ran articles mentioning the Socialist Workers candidates' protest.

Non-Aligned Movement meets in S. Africa

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

DURBAN, South Africa — The 12th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, which includes 113 governments, mostly from semicolonial nations oppressed by imperialism — convened here August 29. The summit began with meetings of senior officials, followed by foreign ministers, and culminates in a conference of heads of state September 2-3. Several thousand delegates and government officials are in attendance, along with hundreds of journalists.

The NAM held its first meeting, attended by representatives of 25 governments, in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1961. Today, the vast majority of the governments in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean are members. Several workers states are among them, including Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and Vietnam. Yugoslavia's membership (Serbia and Montenegro) has been suspended.

Several imperialist governments have for

the first time been given observer status at the meeting, including Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, which is represented by State Department functionary Princeton Lyman.

At this meeting, South Africa is taking the revolving presidency of the organization from Colombia.

Fidel Castro to start state visit

Cuban president Fidel Castro arrived here September 1 to take part in the summit, which is expected to denounce the U.S. embargo against the Caribbean island. Immediately following the meeting, the revolutionary leader will begin a state visit hosted by the South African government. Among other activities, Castro will address the National Assembly in Cape Town September 4 and travel to Johannesburg and Pretoria.

This is Castro's second visit to South Africa, the first being a brief trip to attend the inauguration of African National Con-

gress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela as president following the first democratic, nonracial elections in 1994. Mandela has long urged Castro to return.

To millions of black South Africans and others who fought in the revolutionary democratic struggle against apartheid, the decisive role of Cuban troops in defeating South African invaders in Angola — and the contribution this made to apartheid's demise — is well known. Also appreciated by working people is the presence of about 300 Cuban volunteer doctors who are working in rural areas throughout this country.

"There can be no more an appropriate person to address our parliament than President Fidel Castro," read an August 27 statement from the African National Congress. "We wish to extend our appreciation for the role the Cuban people have played in the anticolonial struggles in Africa, Southern Africa, and the antiapartheid struggle in South Africa." The statement concluded by

demanding an immediate end to Washington's embargo against Cuba. The Cuban leader's visit is opposed by defenders of the privileged social relations inherited from apartheid, such as the Democratic Party, which has announced that it will not attend Castro's speech before the National Assembly.

Sudanese gov't denounces U.S. attack

The Sudanese government has asked the NAM summit to condemn the U.S. cruise missile assault on the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum last month. Mustafa Osman Ismail, Sudan's foreign minister, said at a press conference here August 31 that his government's request for a UN investigation of the bombed site would also be addressed by the gathering. Ismail said one person was killed, 12 seriously injured, and more than 300 put out of a job by the blasts. He rejected U.S. claims that the plant produced "chemical weapons," and also denied that it had any ties to Osama bin Laden, who Washington claims is a "terrorist."

"No country has the unilateral right to attack, destroy, or violate the sovereignty of another country," said the Sudanese official. "We want the American people to know the truth, and the world to know the truth," which is why Khartoum is pressing for a UN investigating team.

Slave vs. slavemaster

South African deputy president Thabo Mbeki, who is also president of the ANC, opened the ministerial portion of the NAM meeting on August 31. Nelson Mandela was scheduled to open the heads of state meeting, which took place after press time.

Mbeki asked, "How can it be permissible that some die of hunger and curable diseases and exposure to the elements because of poverty, and perish in civil wars driven by competition for virtually nonexistent resources, when the volumes of wealth concentrated in some parts of our globe are themselves becoming something of a destructive force?"

Processes falling under the rubric of "globalization" and similar terms "originate from the developed countries of the north, reflect the imperatives of the economies and the levels of development of these countries and therefore, naturally, serve the purposes of our rich global neighbors."

Mbeki said that semicolonial nations cannot develop "through opting out of the world economy and therefore extricating ourselves from the process of globalization." He said that "developing" countries needed to make "globalization" work to their benefit. He said the NAM summit would address the questions of restructuring the UN so that it is more democratic; changing the functioning of the World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund and World Bank; and other economic and trade issues.

"Inasmuch as the slave cannot ask the slave master to provide the strategy and tactics for a successful uprising of the slaves, so must we, who are hungry and treated as minors in a world of adults, also take upon ourselves the task of defining the new world order of prosperity and development for all and equality among nations of the world," Mbeki said.

War in Democratic Republic of Congo

Another central issue before the summit is the war raging in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is drawing in forces from throughout central and southern Africa. A flurry of talks is taking place between various government representatives and UN officials present in Durban.

The governments of Angola, Namibia, and Zimbabwe have now sent troops into Congo to fight on the side of the shaky government of President Laurent Kabila, which says it is under attack from Rwanda.

Rwanda denies that it has sent troops, but says it may do so if there are widespread killings of people of Tutsi background in the conflict. Kabila's forces have stepped up their anti-Tutsi, anti-Rwandan propaganda in recent days.

The South African government has consistently called for a cease-fire and said it would not send troops. South African officials insist that only the Congolese can secure a long-term end to fighting there. Pretoria has come under political fire for this stance from both Kabila and Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe, who called those opposed to sending troops "hypocrites."

Long history of imperialist attempts to divide and rule Sudanese people

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Sudan is one of the countries U.S. officials have declared to be a "terrorist state." That's the U.S. rulers' term for governments that don't "follow the rules," as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and most recently her boss William Clinton, frequently puts it.

The imperialist powers — first London and in the last half century Washington — have a long history of trying to keep Sudan under imperialist domination. That country, the largest in Africa geographically, borders eight other nations — from Libya and Egypt in the north to Uganda and Congo in the south. Its northern coast lies just across the Red Sea from oil-rich Saudi Arabia.

Sudan's economy is marked by the legacy of colonialism and imperialist exploitation. Although there is extremely fertile land in the central and southern parts of the country that could produce enough food for all, only a small portion is cultivated. About 80 percent of the population of 30 million is engaged in agriculture, much of it subsistence farming. The main exports are cotton, gum arabic, and livestock, while most machinery, manufactured goods, and petroleum products are imported. Life expectancy is about 55 years, the infant mortality rate is 78 per 1,000 live births, and the literacy rate is just 27 percent.

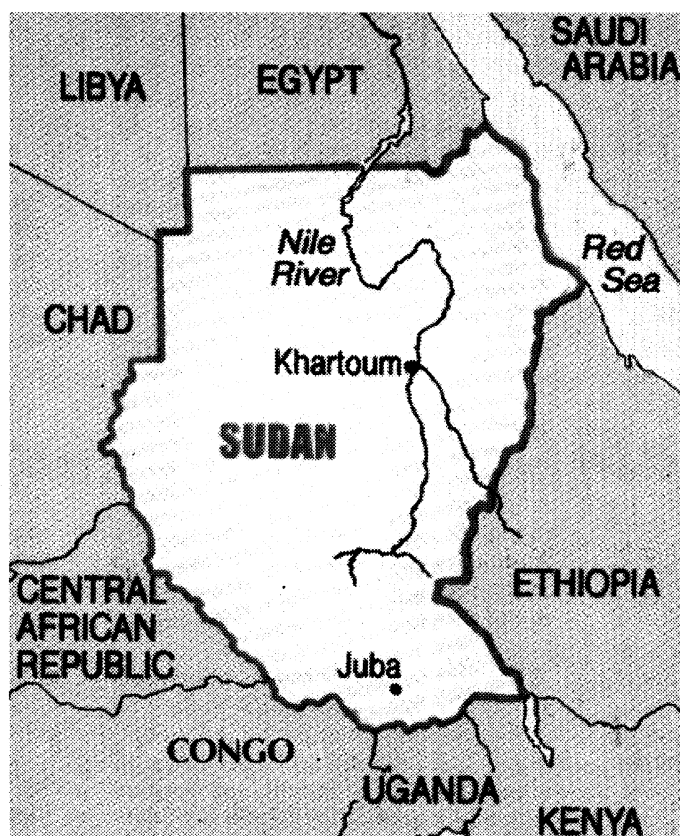
Most of the inhabitants in northern Sudan are Arab; in the south most are Black. Overall, 52 percent of the Sudanese population is Black and 39 percent Arab. About 70 percent are Muslim, 25 percent hold indigenous beliefs, and 5 percent are Christian.

During the imperialist powers' final frenzy to carve up the African continent at the end of the 19th century, an independent government took power in Sudan in 1885, the victory of a four-year uprising. It was immediately besieged by Turkish, Egyptian, Italian, and Belgian troops — backed by the British rulers — and eventually overthrown in 1899. Rebellions against British rule continued almost nonstop for the next 20 years.

London imposed private land ownership in place of the communal relations that existed, and fostered the growth of a Sudanese landlord class. The colonial rulers consciously carried out a "southern policy" in Sudan that sought to pit the majority Muslim and Arab peoples of the north against the Black Africans in the south. According to an official 1924 British government report, the southern policy was aimed at "teaching these savages the elements of common sense, good behavior, and obedience to government authority."

Struggle for national independence

Despite repression, the struggle for national independence began to grow again in the 1930s. Workers began to fight for higher wages, and in 1951 the Sudan Workers Trade Union Federation adopted a clear stance for independence from Britain. In



December 1955 the Sudanese parliament declared independence; British rule formally ended Jan. 1, 1956.

Prior to independence, a rebellion by forces calling themselves Anyana began in the south, fueled by the antagonisms that had previously been fostered by the British colonialists as well as by discrimination against southern peoples by the regime in Khartoum. Social conditions, poor throughout the country, were worse in the south and remain so to this day.

Workers, students, and farmers throughout country also demanded from the newly independent government, and the series of regimes that followed it, land reform and other steps to improve their lives. In 1969, Col. Gaafar al-Nimeiry took power in a coup by radical nationalist forces politically inspired by Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt.

Nasser was the former Egyptian president whose regime carried out extensive nationalizations in the 1950s. These included the 1956 expropriation of the Suez Canal, which sparked a British, French, and Israeli invasion of Egypt and massive popular mobilizations throughout the Arab world.

Washington and Tel Aviv, which had been giving some backing to the Anyana rebels, stepped up that aid to put pressure on the new government.

As Nimeiry moved in by the early 1970s to clamp down on the trade unions and working-class parties, his regime won the confidence of Washington and signed a truce with Anyana in 1972.

Nimeiry threw Sudan further open to exploitation by corporations from the imperialist centers and agreed to large loans from the International Monetary Fund and other imperialist banks that did very little to develop industry and infrastructure. By the early 1980s, Sudan's foreign debt was \$9

billion, with interest alone totaling \$1 billion a year. Annual inflation hit about 50 percent, while wages remained stagnant.

Nimeiry responded to the growing discontent among workers and peasants with stepped up repression, including imposing his own extreme version of *sharia* (Islamic law), providing for amputations and hanging as the penalty for a variety of "crimes." This move was widely opposed, including by the main organized Muslim currents, and was particularly resented among the non-Muslim peoples in the south. Movements in the south for autonomy or for independence started up again in 1983. The main force that emerged there was the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which at that time rejected the call for a separate southern state and instead sought to unite opposition forces throughout the country.

Emergence of civil war

Nimeiry's attempt in March 1985 to raise food prices as demanded by the IMF and World Bank sparked a wave of protests that culminated with his ouster in a military coup later that year. Sadiq al-Mahdi was elected prime minister the next year on pledges that he would repeal the *sharia*, but he merely suspended the code. The civil war continued. Combined with a drought that hit much of Africa, the internal conflict led to famine conditions, particularly in the south. In 1989, a group of military officers led by Brig. Gen. Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir took power, abolishing the constitution and banning political activity.

The new regime, which carried out similar policies to those of the Mahdi government, earned the wrath of Washington for its stance in relation to other political forces in the region. During Washington's 1990-91 assault on the people of Iraq, the Sudanese government sided with Baghdad. Sudan was one of many countries in the region where thousands of working people took to the streets to denounce the U.S.-organized slaughter. Bashir also pursued closer ties with the Libyan government, including floating the idea of merging the two countries. And the Sudanese government has backed the Palestinian people in United Nations votes to condemn the Israeli regime.

Citing such deeds, the White House has branded Sudan a "terrorist state" for the last five years. Among the charges Washington has used to justify the label are that Palestinian and Lebanese guerrillas have supposedly been allowed to train on Sudanese soil.

Meanwhile, the economic squeeze by U.S. and other imperialist banks grinds on. Sudan's foreign debt in 1996 was \$20 billion, nearly equal to the country's Gross Domestic Product, and the IMF has continued to demand austerity to ensure payments on this debt.

Pretext for U.S. bombing falls apart

Continued from front page

on the defensive in trying to justify the destruction of the factory in the Sudanese capital Khartoum, which produced half of the country's medicine supplies. At least one worker was killed in the assault and 10 others seriously injured, according to Sudanese officials.

U.S. officials claimed they had proof that the plant was involved in the production of nerve gas and was somehow connected with Osama bin Laden, a Saudi Arabian businessman who Clinton has recently begun calling the world's biggest terrorist. The only physical evidence they have cited — without allowing anyone else to examine it — is a soil sample allegedly taken several yards from the plant some months ago by a person hired by the CIA. Lab tests supposedly showed the sample contained a chemical known as Empta, which U.S. officials claim has no use except in producing nerve gas "by the Iraqi method."

Pretext for Sudan assault crumbles

But less than a week after the attack, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons told reporters that a search of scientific papers showed that the chemical could also be used in the production of fungicides, antimicrobial agents, and other commercial products. Other scientists noted that Empta is chemically similar to several pesticides and herbicides currently in use, and that it could also be the product of the breakdown of other chemicals.

The White House also feigned surprise that Al Shifa Pharmaceutical plant — which President William Clinton personally selected as a bombing target — actually produces pharmaceuticals. "We... have seen no products, commercial products that are sold out of this facility," a person the *New York Times* called a senior intelligence official said right after the attack. But the plant, which just opened two years ago, produced a wide range of human and veterinary medicines. It had even signed a contract to sell veterinary products to Baghdad under the draconian UN embargo against Iraq.

Even some British and German officials, whose governments backed the U.S. military action, questioned the Clinton administration's stated reasons for the bombing. Several German publications reported that Bonn's ambassador to Sudan sent a cable to his superiors reporting that the plant produced antibiotics, antimalarial drugs, and so on.

The Sudanese government asked the United Nations to send an investigative team to examine the remains of the factory for any sign of chemical weapons; U.S. and UN officials brushed off this request.

The connection to bin Laden appears similarly illusory. In the days leading up to the U.S. missile assaults on Afghanistan and Sudan, the big-business press declared that the previously unmentioned Saudi national had assets of some \$300 million that was supposedly used to finance dozens of attacks on U.S. military and other targets. But an article in the August 28 *Washington Post* noted that U.S. officials "aren't even certain" whether bin Laden's fortune "amounts to the \$300 million previously estimated or is closer to one-tenth that sum." And bin Laden has no direct ownership in the Al Shifa factory.

To try to get its propaganda campaign back on track, the White House organized a briefing for more than 25 senators September 2. After the meeting with CIA director George Tenet, Defense Secretary William Cohen, and Air Force Gen. Joseph Ralston, several legislators — Republican and Democratic — told the press they had been reassured.

"The attack was justified both at the plant and at the terrorist camp in Afghanistan," declared Republican Robert Smith.

"They made a compelling case," added Democrat Jack Reed.

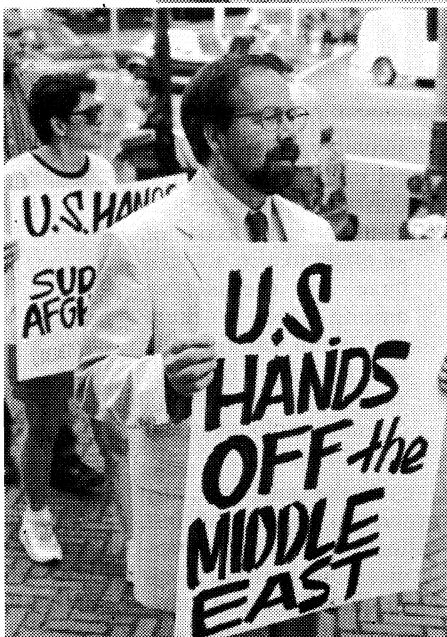
Liberals back Afghanistan assault

Some liberal commentators have balked at the White House line on the bombing in Sudan, while wholeheartedly defending the supposed right of Washington to bomb "real" terrorists. A September 1 column by *New York Times* pundit Anthony Lewis was typical. "With its special power and responsibility in the world, the United States has to be free to act unilaterally in urgent circumstances," he began, citing the Reagan administration's bombing of Libya in 1986 and last month's missile assault on Afghanistan as examples of the "right" way to use U.S. military might. But since there are questions over the rationalizations for the assault on the medicine factory, "a proper



Left: Militant/Lisa Alhberg

Above: Students of the International Islamic University in Islamabad, Pakistan, demonstrate against Washington's bombing August 21. Left: Scott Breen, Socialist Workers candidate for state senate, participates in picket line August 22 against bombing of Afghanistan and Sudan in Seattle, Washington.



inquiry would clear the air. And we should offer to pay compensation if we were wrong. That course

would preserve the credibility that the United States must have."

Others have demanded greater use of U.S. force. Various bourgeois figures have called for lifting the supposed ban on political assassinations by U.S. spy agencies. The *Wall Street Journal* ran an opinion piece titled "The Etiquette of Killing bin Laden," by someone it described as "a former Middle Eastern-targets officer in the CIA's clandestine service."

Sen. Richard Lugar declared that since bin Laden wasn't killed in the bombing, "he ought to be pursued instantly and found and his influence should be terminated."

The *Asian Wall Street Journal's* editorial page editor, Nancy deWolf Smith, penned a column titled, "Afghanistan Needs U.S. Intervention." Referring to the civil war that Washington fostered for many years, she argued, "Almost every state player involved — particularly Russia, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia — has had an active interest in keeping Afghanistan's turmoil going. Unless the U.S. re-enters the scene to call the game off, by this time next year it may be too late. In a worst-case scenario, people like Mr. bin Laden could be within reach of Pakistan's nuclear weapons."

The other side of Washington's "antiterror" propaganda centers on the in-

dictment of two men the U.S. government has accused of involvement in the bombing of the U.S. embassy in Kenya. U.S. officials bragged that it was a victory of law enforcement to have suspects to try so quickly, and to be holding the trial in New York, not Nairobi.

Show trial is prepared in New York

Both Mohamed Rashed Daoud al-'Owhali and Mohammed Sadiq Odeh were brought to the United States and are jailed in New York City. Al-'Owhali, who holds a Yemenese passport, was arrested by Kenyan officials two days after the August 7 bombing. He was reportedly interrogated twice by FBI agents, on August 12 and 20. The U.S. government claims that in the second interrogation al-'Owhali stated that he was a passenger in the truck that carried the bomb to the embassy.

Odeh, a Palestinian engineer, also supposedly confessed to helping plan the bombing, after being jailed in Pakistan for more than a week. At his August 28 arraignment, Odeh's lawyer said his client had acknowledged membership in an organization led by bin Laden, but did not confess to involvement in the bombing.

Both were arraigned on 12 counts of murder, as well as charges of conspiracy to commit murder, and the use of a weapon of mass destruction. They face up to life imprisonment or the death penalty.

This scenario, including the conspiracy charges aimed at linking bin Laden to the bombing, are reminiscent of the frame-up trial of Sheik Omar Abdel Raman and nine others in New York. They were convicted in early 1996 of conspiracy in an alleged bombing plot, after being branded in the media and in court as "Islamic fanatics."

New York officials have seized on the presence of al-'Owhali and Odeh in the city as an opportunity to step up "security," including deploying more cops, erecting barricades on some downtown streets, and banning any gatherings on the City Hall steps.

Sudan ambassador denounces U.S. bombing

BY JANICE LYNN

WASHINGTON, DC — At a packed news conference here September 2, the ambassador of Sudan denounced the U.S. government's August 20 cruise missile attack on the Al Shifa pharmaceutical factory as a "violation of the territorial integrity of Sudan" and part of Washington's "arrogant disregard for the peoples of Africa."

H.E. Mahdi Ibrahim Mohamed announced he had formally advised the U.S. State Department the previous day that all diplomatic personnel in the United States were being immediately recalled to his country as the "strongest possible protest of this violation of Sudan's sovereignty."

Mohamed reviewed the evidence refuting the U.S. administration's "untrue and unsubstantiated allegations" that this plant was producing a chemical that could be used to produce nerve gas. He also reiterated the Sudanese government's call on the United Nations to conduct an international investigation into this incident. "Why is the U.S. government blocking this inquiry?" he asked.

The ambassador said the Sudanese government was requesting an apology from the Clinton administration and an acknowledgment that it "committed a serious error," as well as "compensation for the loss of life and limb and badly needed medicine for the people of Sudan."

In response to one reporter's question about why Washington had so much hostility towards Khartoum, the ambassador said he wanted to differentiate between the people of the United States who he believed

were "questioning and suspicious of the legitimacy of this attack" and the U.S. government, which he believed "knowing the military might available to it wanted to show it was ready to use it against smaller countries."

He also said in response to another question that he welcomed any independent fact-finding trip of U.S. citizens. "Thousands of individuals have examined the damaged factory or breathed the air," he said, "and not one person has suffered from any chemical reaction or exposure."

Mohammed also took note of the tens of thousands of Sudanese who took to the streets in demonstrations in cities throughout Sudan as well as the international protests that have taken place. He said flowers and messages of sympathy had been received at the embassy here by ordinary Americans opposing the actions of the U.S. government towards Sudan.

Nearly 90 people attended the conference, including a number of Sudanese, many of whom opposed the government. Several of them asked questions about "human rights violations" by Khartoum and alleged that the regime there "harbored terrorists" like the Saudi Arabian businessman Osama bin Laden, who Washington has tried to paint as the mastermind behind the U.S. embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Mohammed said that his government did not know of any terrorist activities bin Laden had allegedly been involved in and that bin Laden had been in Sudan in his capacity as a businessman who financed the building of roads.

Janice Lynn is a member of the International Association of Machinists in Washington, D.C.

D.C. socialists file to get on ballot

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — After completing a successful five-week petitioning drive, supporters of Sam Manuel, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Washington, D.C., filed 3,709 signatures August 25 — nearly 25 percent above the requirement — to qualify for ballot status in the November 3 election. "My campaign supporters and I were proud to join others in picketing the White House as soon as we learned about Clinton's missile strikes against Sudan and Afghanistan," stated Manuel.

"I am a freight conductor on Conrail and a member of the United Transportation Union," he said in a statement released to the media the day the petitions were filed. "I supported my co-workers — the track workers — who shut down the railroad for 10 hours last week to protest company contract violations and sent a message to Conrail's new owners that they cannot walk all over us.... My campaign will stand with all city workers fighting for better contracts. And I will continue to stand with the Black farmers in their historic fight against gov-

ernment discrimination and to regain their land." Also filing for a spot on the ballot is Mary Martin, SWP candidate for D.C. delegate to the House of Representatives. Martin is a member of the International Association of Machinists and works on the ramp for Northwest Airlines at Washington's Reagan-National Airport. She submitted petitions with 3,623 signatures. The SWP is also running Olympia Newton, a student at George Washington University and organizer of the D.C. chapter of the Young Socialists, for City Council at-large, and Brian Williams, a member of the United Steelworkers of America, for City Council Chairman.

In mid-August, Manuel spoke to some 130 people at a mayoral forum sponsored by the National Conference of Black Lawyers. He also participated in a mayoral debate hosted by the Latino Civil Rights Center and at a tenant's association meeting at a giant high rise apartment building in Anacostia.

Brian Williams is a member of the United Steelworkers of America local 2609.

The political legacy of Malcolm X and the struggle for Black freedom

The selection below, on the place of the struggle for Black freedom in the socialist revolution in the United States, is excerpted from "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," a resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party in 1990. It is included in Part IV of the resolution, "Rebuilding a World Communist Movement." The entire resolution will be published later this year in issue no. 11 of the Marxist magazine *New International*. It is copyright © 1998 by 408 Printing and Publishing, reprinted by permission.

5. The class structure of the Black nationality is different in the 1990s than it was in the 1960s, to say nothing of the 1930s.

a) Today, as a result of the victories won by the Black rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, there is a substantially larger petty-bourgeois layer in the Black population. This layer has been able to integrate itself into the broader middle class to a degree that would have been unthinkable to people of all classes and races in the United States even twenty-five years ago.

b) At the same time, the large proletarian majority of the Black nationality has borne the brunt of the sharply worsening economic and social conditions of working people over the past decade. Broad layers of workers who are Black have been driven onto the knife's edge of poverty and into social conditions that are even more segregated — by race and by class — than the late 1960s or early 1970s.¹

c) As a result of this greater social differentiation, the next upsurge in the struggle for Black rights will rapidly confront a polarization along class lines that will be sharp and deep.

(1) Petty-bourgeois layers will seek to impose their class perspectives and their organizational and political dominance in order to defend their gains against a racism that continues to be systemic and to advance their own integration into capitalist economic, social, and political institutions.

(2) Above all, they will seek to channel any broader movement for Black rights in a class-collaborationist direction — away from class combat and independent working-class political action, away from political initiatives by workers and youth that threaten to break the mold, and away from the development of a broader communist leadership of the working class.

(3) From the outset, spokespeople from the newly

1. To cite a few examples of this continuing trend, in July 1998 the official U.S. government unemployment figure for Blacks was 10.4 percent, more than two and half times the overall rate. The jobless rate for Blacks aged 16–19 was 29.9 percent, also two and a half times that for the population as a whole. The median family income of Blacks is less than 60 percent of that of whites, and the gap was substantially wider in 1996 than in 1967. Thirty percent of African-Americans live below the miserly official U.S. government poverty line. Meanwhile, one-third of Black males between the ages of 20 and 29 are either on probation, on parole, or in prison in the United States; more Black males than white males are in U.S. prisons, although Blacks make up less than 12 percent of the U.S. population. (Altogether, 5.4 million people in the United States were either on probation, on parole, or in prison in 1995 — a 300 percent increase since 1980, while the U.S. population grew less than 17 percent over that same period. With nearly 600 out of every 100,000 residents in prison, the United States has by far the highest incarceration rate in the world.)

arrived middle-class layers in the Black population will appeal to nationalist sentiments as part of an effort to win a social base for themselves among Black workers and youth entering the struggle against racist assaults and intensifying capitalist exploitation and oppression.

d) At the same time, any upsurge in the battle against national oppression and racist discrimination will much more quickly deepen interconnections between those struggles and any developing rank-and-file leadership in the union movement, of which workers who are Black will come to comprise disproportionate numbers as compared to Blacks as a percentage of the population.

(1) An advance in the fight for Black rights will add new power to labor struggles.

(2) A more combative union movement, moreover, will bring decisive social power into the fight for Black liberation.

(3) In the union struggles that are already breaking out today, the percentage of workers who are Black in the rank-and-file leadership is qualitatively greater than anything that was possible in the 1960s or the 1930s.

e) Several new generations of workers and youth who are Black are being attracted to the revolutionary political example and legacy of Malcolm X.

(1) Malcolm's intransigent opposition to racist discrimination and degradation, to "Americanism" in any guise, to any subordination to Washington or any of its political parties, and to imperialism's oppression of the toilers of Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Pacific put him on a revolutionary internationalist and anti-imperialist political course while he was a prominent figure in the Nation of Islam; it was Malcolm's refusal to retreat from this course that prepared him to end all denial as to the state of the central leadership of the Nation. This dynamic culminated in Malcolm being silenced by Elijah Muhammad in late 1963 and prepared his public break with the Nation in early 1964.

(2) As imperialism's deadly intention to silence him forever became more and more clear, Malcolm's political integrity and consistency led him to rapidly break through barrier after barrier at the end of 1964 and the beginning of 1965, and to explain the process publicly as it occurred.

(a) Malcolm rejected his previous opposition to "mixed marriages," a reactionary legacy of the demagogic, antimaterialist foundation of politics inherited from Elijah Mohammad.

(b) He dropped all vestiges of subtle anti-Semitic slurs that were endemic in the Nation and the broader milieu it influenced and that influenced it.

(c) He detailed the political consequences of



Malcolm X spoke with intransigent opposition to racism, Washington and its capitalist parties, and imperialism's exploitation of people in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Pacific. Above, Malcolm X speaking to students in Selma, Alabama, Feb. 4, 1965.

"personal" corruption by explaining how Elijah Muhammad's conduct (with the knowledge and connivance of much of the Nation's leadership) made a mockery of respect for women, let alone the kinds of advances for women's rights that Malcolm had seen were inseparable from social progress and revolutionary struggle everywhere in the world.²

(d) Malcolm exposed and analyzed the inevitable search by the leadership of the Nation for alliances with, and material support from, reactionary organizations; this course flowed from the social character and political limitations of that leadership. Malcolm revealed that in 1960 and 1961 he himself had been personally instructed to pursue or facilitate such alliances with the Ku Klux Klan and American Nazi Party.³

(e) By taking these positions and acting along these lines, Malcolm shed light on the reactionary political consequences and antiproletarian thrust of the corruption born of middle-class aspirations in a leadership pretending to speak for the oppressed — whether integrationist or separatist in its trappings.

(f) At the same time that Malcolm spoke out unflinchingly on all these matters, he deepened a united-front appeal to his followers and to other fighters, as well as to the ranks of the Nation of Islam. He pointed to the unambiguous evidence that forces bigger than the Nation — the assassination machine of U.S. imperialism — were responsible for preparing the deadly assaults to come on himself and his family.

(3) Malcolm's accelerating evolution during the last year of his life toward secular political organization, anticapitalism, and then socialism placed him on a trajectory that converged with that of other revolutionaries and communists worldwide.

(a) He reached out to establish common ground with the communist leadership of Cuba, both in Africa and on occasions when its most prominent representatives, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, traveled to the United States.

(b) He sought collaboration with communists in the United States organized in the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance.

(4) As class battles intensify in the 1990s, working-class fighters of all nationalities, skin colors, and languages will be drawn to Malcolm's political legacy

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2. The events that culminated in Malcolm being silenced and his subsequent break from the Nation of Islam were precipitated by his discovery that Elijah Muhammad had engaged in sexual relations with a number of teenage women and then, when they became pregnant, organized to suspend them from membership in the Nation on charges of "fornication." Malcolm explains in his autobiography that he learned of this from Elijah Muhammad himself in April 1963. When Malcolm refused to join with others in the Nation's chain of command to cover up this abuse — both abuse of women, and abuse of power — Elijah Muhammad decided to silence him. "When I found out that the hierarchy itself wasn't practicing what it preached," Malcolm said in a 1965 interview with the *Young Socialist* magazine, "it was clear that part of its program was bankrupt." That interview is published in full in *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* (Pathfinder, 1991), as well as the Pathfinder pamphlet of the same name.

3. See in particular Malcolm's February 15, 1965, talk at the Audubon Ballroom in Harlem, "There's a Worldwide Revolution Going On," in *Malcolm X, February 1965: The Final Speeches* (Pathfinder, 1992).

Black farmers hold conference in Alabama

BY VED DOOKHUN
AND ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

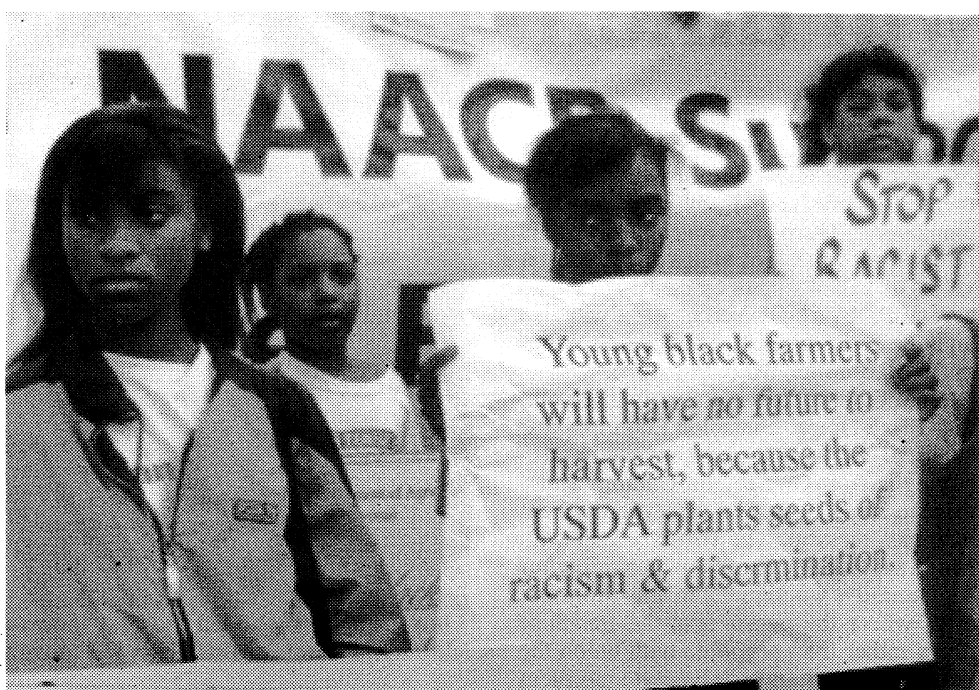
EPES, Alabama — Some 250 people, most of them Black farmers, attended the 31st annual meeting of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund (FSC/LAF) held here August 14-15 at the Rural Training and Research Center. The meeting announced plans for activities, including a pilgrimage to Washington, D.C., in the fall to protest government and bank discrimination against farmers who are Black.

A press conference and prayer vigil is set for September 10 in Washington, where the final announcement will be made about the pilgrimage. The protest action is being called by the Coordinating Council of Black Farmers, a coalition that represents a number of farm organizations, including from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

Many participants came to hear an update on the *Pigford v Glickman* class-action discrimination suit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The \$2.5 billion suit was filed on behalf of 400 farmers in August 1997.

A second lawsuit — *Brewington v Glickman* — is also under way on behalf of an additional 150 farmers who did not file complaints with the USDA before the February 1996 deadline.

Larry Vanderbilt, a veteran of a 23-day sit-in organized by 12 Black farmers at a government loan office in Covington, Tennessee, in 1981 attended the FSC/LAF meeting. He explained the urgent problems farmers faced then and now in trying to get government loans necessary to farm their land. "Here's the problem," Vanderbilt said. "If you grow cotton you have to plant in late April or early May; corn has to go in March. You need the money in advance to buy your seed and fertilizer, to get your equipment ready. When we finally got our money from the government, we always got it too late. The loan officers actually held our checks in the desk drawer until the last day before the check was due to expire." Several others who were part of the 1981 protest also attended the meeting. "Only one of us is still farming," Vanderbilt noted, "but all



Militant/Linda Joyce

Some 200 Black farmers were joined by 100 supporters July 15 to protest decades-long discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

of us will be involved in the class action lawsuit."

J.L. Chestnut, an attorney for the farmers, announced that both the House of Representatives and the Senate have passed bills that would waive the federal statute of limitations on the Equal Opportunity Credit Act for farmer discrimination complaints filed between 1983 and 1996. The government attempted to use the statute to prevent farmers from filing discrimination complaints, arguing that some farmers did not make their complaints within two years of suffering discrimination. Chestnut noted that in 1983, the Reagan administration abolished the USDA Office of Civil Rights where farmers could have filed complaints.

Charles Lee, 53, works a full-time job off his farm in Montezuma, Georgia. A plaintiff in the suit, he explained that he has been forced to buy back his own farm. His paycheck is garnisheed \$165 each week by the bank, leaving him \$124 to get by on. If he meets this arrangement over the next four years he will be able to own his farm. "But I should not have to pay a thing," Lee said. "Why am I paying for the fact that the county boys at the loan office 'lost'

my file for 10 years, including my check for repayment on crops and equipment loans. When they finally found it in 1993 they never applied the money against my debt. Whose fault is that?"

Richard Rominger, deputy secretary of the USDA, also addressed the meeting. While stating that it was intolerable that Black farmers were going out of business three times faster today, he cautioned that "progress is measured slowly."

During the question and answer period, several farmers pointed to difficulties that have been exacerbated by the 1996 farm bill — from staggering prices for agricultural implements and equipment, to onerous debt payments on loans, to continued discrimination in receiving financial assistance. "The only way to help farmers is to keep the prices up," said Mattie Mack, a 62-year-old tobacco farmer from Kentucky. She explained that without better prices for their production, family farmers "couldn't go on much longer." Another farmer from western Tennessee asked Rominger to explain how is he going to survive, when a harvester costs 10 times as much as it did 20 years ago, but he is still getting the same price for cotton two

decades later.

Solidarity with the increased strikes and struggles of workers was also a topic of discussion. Drawing a parallel between the attacks on Black farmers and coal miners, William O. Mack, a 66-year-old farmer from Kentucky, said, "Now that miners are old they are trying to take away their benefits just like they are trying to take away from farmers." He was referring to the recent attempts by the government and coal bosses to gut Black Lung compensation.

The July 1998 newsletter of the National Family Farm Coalition reported that on July 9, striking auto workers and their families in Flint, Michigan, received 1,200 pounds of beef from ranchers in Montana. The Northern Plains Resource Council (NPRC), an organization that represents family farmers, organized the act of solidarity. The newsletter reports that union members on the picket line appreciated the gift. Charles Brown, a 32-year veteran at the General Motors Metal Fabrication Center, said, "It's the thought more than the actual gift — that they are behind us."

For more information on the September 10 protests contact the Black Farmers & Agriculturalists Association, P.O. Box 61 Tillery, North Carolina, 27887 and the Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund, 2769 Church Street, East Point, GA (404) 765-0991.

Ved Dookhun is a member of the United Steelworkers of America. Arlene Rubenstein is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

The struggle for Black freedom today

Continued from Page 8

as they move toward proletarian internationalist and anticapitalist perspectives.

(a) These young revolutionists will become cadres and leaders not only of renewed struggles against all manifestations of racist and national oppression, but also of the working-class movement and communist parties.

(b) This fact underlines the importance of the efforts by communists to keep Malcolm's writings and speeches in print and to expand their circulation to the broadest possible layers of fighters and revolutionists among workers and farmers in the United States and worldwide.

(5) Middle-class misleaders of the Black nationality more and more drape themselves in the mantle of Malcolm X in an effort to build a base for themselves among young people attracted to his example. At the same time, these petty-bourgeois layers fear working-class youth — whether Black, white, or other — and hold them in contempt, echoing bourgeois propaganda about the "dangers of the underclass." (Some also romanticize the "underclass," at a safe distance, projecting onto Black youth their own bourgeois misogyny and brutality.)

(a) Some of these middle-class forces attempt to distort Malcolm's political evolution by portraying his last year as a retreat from revolutionary positions as he supposedly converged toward the perspectives of Martin Luther King, or even toward liberalism. Ignoring Malcolm's outspoken opposition to both the Democratic and Republican parties, these liberals project their own political course and rhetoric onto Malcolm and seek to present him as a forerunner of Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition.

(b) Many of these and other petty-bourgeois political currents practice the politics of demagoguery in the name of nationalism (and sometimes "Marxism," as well). In marked contrast to their own conduct and example, Malcolm emerged as a revolutionary of integrity who knew from the bottom up the conservatizing and ultimately bourgeois character of the corruption of depending on income derived from hustles or organized crime; who became impervious to middle-class aspirations and resentments; to red-baiting, race-baiting, and Stalinist blandishments, let alone racism

(anti-Haitian, anti-Asian, etc.), anti-Semitism, antiwoman bigotry, or similar self-serving demagoguery of any kind.

(6) Malcolm X provides living proof of the capacity of revolutionary-minded fighters from the ranks of the working class to broaden their scope and move toward communism and revolutionary leadership of the highest historic caliber. His example reinforces the judgment that the experienced leading cadres of the SWP who are Black are forerunners of a much broader communist leadership development that will come out of deepening struggles and political clarification.

(a) Given the greater class differentiation in the Black nationality today, nationalist-minded fighters emerging from a new burst forward in the fight for Black liberation will rapidly reach out toward a broader world view, toward Marxism. They will have a better chance than the Black Panther Party generation of avoiding the trap of confusing Stalinism with Marxism.⁴

(b) The wider the struggles against racism, the more self-sacrificing the commitment to fight for Black liberation, and the broader the reach of the labor movement and its vanguard to embrace these struggles, the greater will be the opportunities for influence, recruitment, and renewal of the cadres of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance.

(c) In the United States, as in other imperialist countries, "nation time" and the socialist revolution will triumph together.

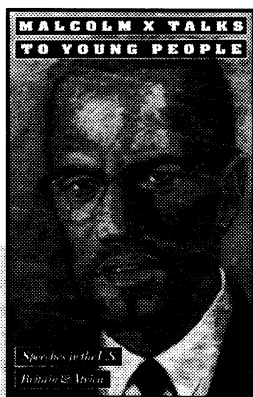
4. Founded in 1966 in Oakland, California, in response to a cop killing of a sixteen-year old Black youth, the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense over the next several years attracted thousands of young Blacks and others repelled by the evils of racism and looking for strategies that addressed the source of the oppression they were fighting. In their search for anticapitalist solutions, however, the leadership of the Black Panthers instead found Stalinism, which at the time still had substantial reserves worldwide. By the end of the 1960s, the combination of thug methods, class-collaborationist illusions, and ultraleft adventures the Panthers absorbed from Stalinism left them wide open to deadly disruption operations by the FBI and other police agencies. Some twenty Panthers were killed, either directly by cops — as in the case of Fred Hampton, murdered in his bed in 1969 by the Chicago police — or in shoot-outs with cops or each other urged on by government provocateurs. Numerous other Panthers were framed up and railroaded to prison.

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McDonald's workers in Canada win union

BY CARL CHAPLIN
AND HAMISH MCDONALD

SQUAMISH, British Columbia — "People have been saying that a union doesn't belong in a fast food place. That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard," said Tessa Lowinger, one of the two high-school aged women who led the first successful drive to unionize a McDonald's restaurant in North America.

In an interview with the *Militant*, Lowinger, her co-worker Jennifer Wiebe, and both their parents recounted the story of why and how the majority of the 83 workers at the locally owned franchise signed union cards, the broad community support that they received for their right to a union, and the national and international response they've gotten.

The fight to organize the third-busiest McDonald's in British Columbia began when Lowinger, 16, and Wiebe, 17, began discussing the need to do something about the deteriorating working conditions with their co-workers and with Lowinger's father, Hans Lowinger, a rail worker and member of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW).

The CAW is the union that now represents the McDonald's workers in Squamish. In just three days, the two young fighters got more than the legally required 55 percent of their co-workers to sign union affiliation cards.

"We didn't get treated the way we should have been," noted Wiebe. She described one incident where she was forced to work with a fever of 102 degrees, because she could not find her own replacement. The fundamental issues of the organizing drive were, in the words of the two leaders, "safety and respect." Lowinger reported that workers received electrical shocks from a broken light switch in the restaurant, and were forced to push two 50 lb. toasters on a muffin cart with a broken wheel, whose contents would often fall onto the employees.

"As soon as they found out we were trying to get the union in, they fixed everything," said Wiebe. She commented on the fear that the word "union" brought to Paul Savage, owner of the restaurant, who attempted to flush out the pro-union vote by

hiring 28 new employees.

Savage was forced by the union to withdraw his demand that new workers be part of the certification vote. Lowinger commented on the verbal abuse received by employees. "Three times a week a girl would be crying at work. You spill a drink, you get yelled at, called stupid. One guy was called a 'retard' " by a boss. Verbal abuse was also an issue in the strike by McDonald's workers in Macedonia, Ohio, last April.

One of the workers involved in that walk-out, Brian Drapp, contacted Lowinger and Wiebe. The two were also contacted by Sarah Inglis, from Orangeville, Ontario, whose drive to organize McDonald's workers there was unsuccessful. The two also met with Martin Lepage and other former McDonald's workers from the Montreal area, where the owner shut the franchise down rather than negotiate with union the majority of workers had chosen to represent them. "They were super happy," said Lowinger, upon hearing of the success in Squamish.

Wiebe and Lowinger were flown by the CAW to Montreal with Lowinger's mother, Michele Lowinger, to address a CAW convention of 1200 service sector workers, where they received a "two- to three-minute standing ovation," said Michele Lowinger. While in Montreal, the three women also visited a picket line of striking Montreal city workers.

The CAW organizes many service workers across Canada, including some 400 Hotel Vancouver workers, who just won a new contract after a successful four-day strike



Above, workers who led the first successful organizing drive at any North American McDonald's restaurant. From left to right, Jennifer Wiebe and Tessa Lowinger.

that effectively shut the hotel down in prime tourist season. Lowinger and Wiebe were warmly welcomed at the hotel workers' picket line in Vancouver, Michele Lowinger said. She added that she was amazed at the support the young union organizers were getting. "A 10-minute shopping trip to downtown Squamish turned into four or five hours," as the two youths were approached by nearly everyone they saw. They were also contacted by BBC television in England.

Lowinger and Wiebe said they recognized the necessity of a union, and not just "boss-to-worker" talks. "In Orangeville [where no union was formed] a week later management was back to pushing them around," said

Lowinger. No union was formed in Macedonia either, where management has yet to live up to their end of agreements reached there.

Commenting on whether she thought that the success in Squamish would inspire other unionization drives, Lowinger said "I think a lot of fast food joints are going to follow." Now bargaining "is going to be the big fight," she added.

Carl Chaplin and Hamish McDonald are members of the Young Socialists in Vancouver. Paul Kouri, a member of the United Steelworkers of America, contributed to this article.

6,300 Connecticut phone workers walk out over two-tier wages

BY GREG MCCARTAN

HARTFORD, Connecticut — "I am fighting to get a better contract for me and my union brothers," said cable repair man John Pawelec while walking the picket line

in front of the Southern New England Telecommunications Corporation (SNET) depot here. "Everyone on my crew except for me is on the two-tier scale, and it just isn't right."

Pawelec is one of the 6,300 members of

Communication Workers of America (CWA) who set up spirited picket lines across Connecticut August 23.

He explained that workers hired after 1992 earn about \$200 less a week and must pay 20 percent of their insurance costs, among other take-backs imposed on them at that time. In addition, there have been no yearly contractual raises since 1992 for any of SNET's union employees, putting them far behind telephone workers elsewhere in the country.

Union members are demanding parity, or at least steps toward it, with workers at major carriers. The company is offering a 10.9 percent pay increase over the next three years, which union members rejected as insufficient after six years with no raise.

"We're striking to get the younger people a future in this company. They are learning about unions now — maybe not in the best way — but we'll stay out as long as we have to," Pawelec said.

In addition to picketing the plant gates, members of CWA Local 1298 here are organizing "mobile pickets," following company trucks driven by bosses to jobs across the area. Strikers inform the customer of the strike issues and set up a picket line.

Local 1298 president Joe Albright said, "We have people working the same job, but with two different pay scales, two different medical payment plans, and two different work rules. It's ridiculous. SNET is the only phone company in the country that requires a co-pay on health insurance."

Albright, a cable splicer, pointed to company practices such as providing huge salary increases for SNET bosses as a sore point for the union.

The annual salary of SNET's CEO, for example, went from \$322,009 in 1991 to \$948,269 in 1997. SNET has also squeezed productivity increases and higher profits from its operation since the take-back contract in 1992.

The SNET workers' strike began in the midst of the walkout by 34,000 telephone workers at US West, and less than two weeks after 73,000 CWA members won a strike at Bell Atlantic, pushing back that regional phone company's take-back demands.

Minnesota: Hmong youth protest racist remarks

BY MAREA HIMELGRIN

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — More than 500 chanting and cheering protesters marched from the Lao Family Center to the State Capitol here August 22 to protest racist remarks directed at the Hmong community and culture on a June 9 radio broadcast by the KQRS Morning Show.

The most popular chant along the march route was in Hmong and went "Who are we? Hmong! Who's a racist? KQRS!"

The protest was organized by Community Action Against Racism (CAAR), which was formed two months ago in response to the radio broadcast. The show, which featured local "shock jock" Tom Bernard, made fun of Hmong culture while relating gory details of the case of a 13-year-old Hmong girl in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, accused of killing her newborn son.

In a tape recording of the broadcast played at the rally, Bernard can be heard exclaiming "That's a lot of egg rolls!" after noting that the Hmong teenager faced a fine of \$10,000 if convicted on the charge of hiding a corpse. Summing up his views, Bernard told listeners that the Hmong should, "Assimilate or hit the god— road!"

The Hmong, a tribal people who lived as farmers in the hills of Laos, were recruited by the CIA during the Vietnam War. After the victory of the Vietnamese revolution, the Hmong faced persecution in Laos and many fled to refugee camps in Thailand. Thousands eventually came to live in Minnesota, sponsored by religious groups.

KQRS was invited to send a representative to the rally but declined. On the air, Tom Bernard said, "Light it up all you want, have all the rallies you want. You're a bunch of god— liars!"

Since radio station representatives refused to appear at the protest, organizers invited a costumed Tom Bernard character dressed in altered KQRS bumper stickers to speak. He told the crowd to cheers, "It's not really

me—it's the big money. I'm just a puppet." KQRS is owned by the Walt Disney Corporation. A popular sign at the rally read "KQRS— Disney's Racist Radio Station."

A poster listed the demands that CARR had sent to KQRS. They included removing "Tak," a recurring parody of an Asian, from the morning show; printed apologies from KQRS; air time for members of the Hmong community; and a written public policy specifying punishments for on-air racial remarks. Station Manager Amy Waggoner rejected all the demands, telling the press she found them "puzzling."

Numerous elected officials and Democratic Party candidates spoke at the rally, including U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone and U.S. Congressman Bruce Vento. Socialist Workers Party candidate for Minnesota Governor, Tom Fiske, told the crowd that

he "saluted the magnificent demonstration" and urged people to "continue to rely on our own numbers and solidarity."

The most enthusiastically greeted speakers at the rally were representatives of Black community groups. When Chris Nisan, speaking for the NAACP, told the crowd that he was going to quote from Malcolm X, he was greeted with cheers.

While the protest was multiracial and multigenerational, it was primarily made up of Hmong youth. All the CARR organizers who spoke were in their teens and early 20s. Politics in the Twin Cities Hmong community in the past has often been dominated by right-wing Hmong military officers who fought for Washington in Vietnam.

Marea Himelgrin is a member of the United Steelworkers of America.



500 people protested local radio's racist remarks in St. Paul, Minnesota, August 22.

NWA pilots strike

Continued from front page

workers, gave massive concessions to Northwest, the number four domestic carrier in revenues, including a 15 percent pay cut. This time the pilots are demanding a 15 percent pay raise over three years, a retroactive pay increase back to October 1996 when their contract expired, an end to the two-tier wage scale whereby junior pilots start off at \$27,000 a year, and protection against layoffs that result from alliances the company makes with other major carriers like Continental or through affiliation to smaller commuter outfits that use small regional jets.

The company's final offer included a 9 percent pay raise over four years, a reduction in the two-tier pay structure time from five to three years, a lump sum signing bonus instead of retroactive pay, a profit-sharing plan tied to the company's profit margin, and layoff protection only through one year after the contract expires.

Attitudes of other NWA workers

ALPA has not asked the International Association of Machinists (IAM) or the Teamsters, which organize ground operations workers and flight attendants respectively, to honor its picket lines. But most Machinists and other unionists at Northwest support the pilots strike. Both of these unions are in the middle of their own contract negotiations with the company.

"The pilots are not asking for anything outlandish," said Ron Baldwin, a ramp trainer at Washington National Airport, and former striker at the now-defunct Eastern Airlines, in an interview with the *Militant*. "You have to look closely at the company's offer. The profit-sharing deal is tied to a level of profit in the future that is questionable. And on top of the concessions that all the employees gave, the company is saying the stocks they gave us [in lieu of wage raises in 1993] should be considered part of the workers' compensation package. I have a problem with that. Our employee stock, unlike management's, had sales restrictions. So when the stocks hit high levels in the spring, the CEOs made millions because they could freely exercise their stock options whereas many employees had to sell off their stocks earlier, piecemeal, and at lower rates due to monetary need."

Randy Roles, a ramp worker at Washington National with nine years at Northwest, stated: "Three days into the pilots strike, the company is losing millions. So my question is: What is the company's plan? To run down the stock so they can buy it up again? To break the unions? Our plan can only be to hold on strong, to stick together and get everything we can now. Because in the next contract, if the company is not showing a profit they are going to say they need another pay cut."

Other workers, worried about layoffs that became effective on September 3, wondered if perhaps the pilots were going too far. "I know the pilots got pushed into the strike because the company let things go on too long with them, but I'm also concerned that if the pilots ask for too much, a lot of jobs in

and out of the airlines could be lost," said Patricia Butler, a ramp worker for five years at the same airport.

Northwest pilots walked off the job four times between 1969 and 1978. In the previous three decades, Northwest pilots conducted strike seminars for co-workers at other airlines and in 1968 wrote a strike manual still used today by pilot groups at all major carriers. One of the main founders of ALPA, which was first established in the late 1920s, was Charles Holman, a fired Northwest pilot.

In announcing the strike to the press, Northwest pilot Steve Zoller, a Master Executive Council Chairman for ALPA, stated: "Northwest management has refused to seriously negotiate.... We believe our proposals are fair, reasonable and affordable."

Company propaganda offensive

Northwest Airlines, lost no time in launching a media campaign including press statements, TV interviews, and full-page ads in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *USA Today* to portray the pilots as greedy and insensitive to the needs of the flying public. Northwest spokesman John Austin told the press the pilots had rejected an offer that was "abundantly fair and reasonable" and said the pilots "would not temper their short-term self-interest." He added, "I cannot overstate the devastation the pilots will cause to the airline and the community." Coverage in the big-business dailies, like the August 31 front page *New York Times* article headlined, "Strike By Pilots Cuts the Cord that Sustains North Dakota," have bolstered this claim.

Northwest's newspaper ads highlight the highest salary senior pilots get and quote an ALPA statement that the pilots are seeking a contract that would "set a standard for pilot contracts in the United States, and, at the same time, influence pilots contracts throughout the world." The company's ad copy then reads, "It makes us wonder, who are they really working for?"

The strike came after nearly two years of failed government-mediated negotiations between the pilots' union and Northwest. Under provisions of the Federal Railway Labor Act, railroad and airline workers' strikes and other labor actions can be thwarted by lengthy government "mediated" negotiations, government-imposed "cooling off" periods, and back to work orders.

Government strikebreaking role

The company had hoped that the Clinton administration would intervene to order the pilots back to work before the September 5-6 Labor Day weekend, which is a holiday for most working people and a high travel period. President William Clinton



Militant/John Sarge

Hundreds of Northwest Airlines flight attendants, organized by the Teamsters, are also fighting for a contract, demanding the company end its 23-month delay in a contract offer. Above and left, about 250 flight attendants and supporters picketed outside the airline terminal at Detroit's Metro Airport August 7. The pickets were joined by auto workers, locked-out Detroit newspaper workers, and other unionists.



ernment-mediated negotiations with the company, which have failed to settle the main issues of pay, retroactive compensation, and job security. These are the same issues that pilots and flight attendants face. A release from negotiations by the federal government would start a 30-day "cooling off period" at the end of which the IAM would be free to strike if no agreement has been reached with the company. No release has been granted as of press time.

The 11,000 flight attendants at Northwest organized in Teamsters Local 2000 are conducting national actions to bring attention to their contract fight. On September 4 the flight attendants will conduct airport rallies at the company's flight attendant bases across the country. They are asking supporters to bring alarm clocks and to sound the alarms to "send management a wake-up call" as a Teamsters' leaflet explains.

It is this contract fight on two other union fronts that the company must weigh in its stand-off with the pilots union. An article in the *Wall Street Journal* on August 31 said Northwest is fearful that if they meet most of the pilots demands the other unions will demand similar settlements. This point was not lost on Machinists members, who were left with only painting and clean-up projects at work in the first week of the strike before the layoffs took affect. Unionists made use of the down time to discuss fully all the angles of the contract fight by Northwest workers.

In a related development the Airline Mechanics Fraternal Organization (AMFA), a company-minded outfit, will try to break Northwest's 9,100 cleaners and mechanics away from the Machinists in an upcoming election to decertify the IAM. The federal National Mediation Board has given the go-ahead to AMFA's union-busting bid. For years AMFA has tried unsuccessfully to win representation of mechanics, and more recently the cleaners, away from the IAM at the major airlines. AMFA's refusal to support union strikes and ties to the antiunion Right to Work Foundation repel many union fighters.

In other developments, Air Canada pilots went on strike over pay and working conditions on September 2. Also 2,100 ALPA-organized pilots at Trans World Airline (TWA) have agreed by a 3-to-2 margin to a four-year contract that would give the pilots their first raise in 12 years. After a decade of concessions to the company, TWA pilots average 60 percent less pay than pilots at the other major airlines.

The last major airlines strike was at Eastern Airlines in 1989. Machinist members defeated Eastern boss Frank Lorenzo's drive to break the unions. Eastern went out of business in January, 1991.

Mary Martin is a member of IAM Local 1759 and works on the ramp at Northwest at Washington National Airport. IAM members Jeff Jones in Minneapolis, Arlene Rubenstein and Mike Italie in Atlanta, Mark Friedman in Los Angeles; and UAW member John Sarge in Detroit contributed to this article.

ordered a meeting between Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater and company and union officials September 1. Clinton recently used the Railway Labor Act to end a strike by Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way (BMW) track workers at Conrail within 10 hours, as he did against the American Airline pilots strike in February 1997.

There are indications that the government may let the strike unfold in the hopes that the employers can push back the pilots and also the demands for substantial wage raises by other unionists at the carrier.

Northwest has borrowed about \$2 billion and plans to use another \$1 billion from its own funds for a \$3 billion war chest to withstand losses of \$15 million a day during the strike. The company laid off 27,500 workers on September 2. At Atlanta's DC-9 maintenance base, the company has been contracting out maintenance work for a month leading up to the pilots strike. Workers had put up a cardboard sign at one of the maintenance shops: "Big Garage Sale Friday August 28, 1998. Honeycomb Shop Going Out of Business. Mech[anics] for Hire (Cheap)."

On September 1, Standard & Poor's Corp. placed Northwest's double B corporate credit rating on its Credit-Watch list with negative implications as a result of the strike. S&P said the airline's rating could be lowered more "if the strike and its settlement are sufficiently costly and materially impact Northwest's financial position." Work-safe and work-to-rule campaigns conducted on the job by International Association of Machinists (IAM) members and flight attendants in the spring and summer, along with massive refusals of voluntary overtime shifts, resulted in a record number of flight cancellations and cost Northwest \$72 million in the second quarter.

Machinists have authorized strike

Among the strongest supporters of the pilots strike are the other Northwest unionized employees who faced the same demand for concessions from the company, which resulted in a 12-15 per cent pay cut in their previous contracts. The 27,000-strong IAM ground operations work force voted down a contract offer by Northwest on July 29 and also voted to authorize a strike, if needed.

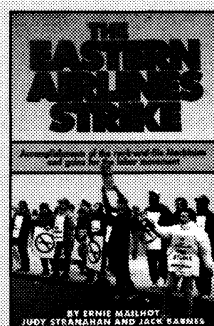
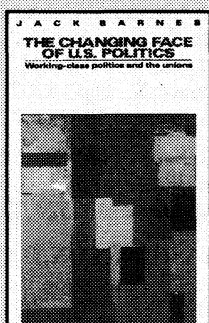
Subsequently, the IAM has asked to be released from the nearly two years of gov-

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CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Deepening Crisis in Russia and Asia Shakes Wall St. Speakers: Craig Honts, California election campaign manager, Socialist Workers Party and member of United Transportation Union; Carlos Hernández, organizer of Los Angeles Young Socialists and Socialist Workers congressional candidate. Fri., Sept. 11, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation: \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Eyewitness Report from the North of Ireland. Speakers: Scott Daugherty, Irish solidarity activist recently returned from north of Ireland, and

Gary Cohen, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Sept. 11, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

MICHIGAN

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What Is the Root of Detroit's Economic Crisis? Speaker: John Sarge, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Congress in 15th C.D. and member of the United Auto Workers. Fri., Sept. 11, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. 7414 Woodward. Donation: \$4. Dinner \$5. Tel: (313) 875-0100.

OHIO

Cleveland

Korea is One. Speaker: Argiris Malapanis, staff writer for the *Militant*, who participated in an

international fact-finding delegation to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Sat. Sept. 12, 7:30 p.m. 1832 Euclid Ave. Donation: \$5. Tel: (216) 861-6150.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

Korea is One. Speaker: Argiris Malapanis. Fri. Sept. 11, 7:30 p.m. 1103 E. Carson St. Donation \$5. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

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Resistance to British Rule in Northern Ireland Continues. Report from Troops Out Movement Delegation to Belfast. Sat., Sept. 12, 7 p.m.

Upstairs at 60 Shudehill. Donation: £2. Tel: 0161 839 1766.

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Auckland

The Russian Currency Crisis. Speaker: Terry Coggan, Communist League. Fri., September 11, 7 p.m. 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel (9) 379-3075.

Christchurch

Socialist Educational and Active Workers Conference. September 19-20. Organized by the Communist League and Young Socialists. For further information, call Auckland (9) 379-3075, or Christchurch (3) 365-6055.

Workers' struggles worry Moscow and imperialists

Continued from front page
formally privatized.

Yeltsin endorsed the terms of the "forced debt restructuring" in an August 25 decree under which foreign investors will face losses estimated at between \$33 and \$100 billion. The next day the Dow Jones Industrial average dropped 357 points; four days later it fell another 512 points, wiping out all its gains for the year. Capitalist investments in Russia total more than \$200 billion. Nomura Securities, Japan's largest investment firm, announced September 1 that its joint U.S. and British operations lost \$350 million on their holdings of Russian government bonds at the end of August. Barclays of London choked on losses totaling \$540 million. German financiers, who are the heaviest lenders to Russia, are now demanding major concessions from Moscow before extending new loans.

Some capitalist traders expect to see the value of their holdings in Russia plummet by 90 percent. "It's total outright illegal confiscation," muttered an official with III Offshore Advisors, a West Palm Beach investment firm.

Other investors are debating whether to push for seizing Russian banking assets held overseas. "There is no likelihood that things will be any better in three months when the moratorium ends," asserted Max Gutbrod, attorney with a U.S. law firm that represents imperialist investments.

'Abide by the rules'

Clinton flew to Moscow August 31 to lecture the Russian people about the harsh realities of capitalism, to tell them to continue tightening their belts, and abide by "the rules" of the profit system. "I do not believe there are any painless solutions," he told students and Russian leaders at a September 1 meeting at Moscow State University. "To get your fair share of investment, you have to play by the rules that everyone else has to play by.... How will my investment be protected? If I lose my money I want to know it's because I made a bad decision, not because the law didn't protect my money." Clinton also made it clear that no major new loans or other infusions of cash to prop up confidence in the drowning Yeltsin regime are forthcoming from Washington.

The imperialists are demanding that the Kremlin adhere to the austerity program prescribed by the U.S. and other imperialist interests through the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which includes measures to eliminate the social conquests that have survived in the Russian workers state despite its tattered condition. IMF demands, if implemented, would lead to the eventual elimination of free child-care centers and health clinics; doing away with price subsidies of food, rent, and other necessities; and deep cuts in education, pension, health, and other hard-earned entitlements. It is only through these social gains that working people have been able to survive for months and sometimes years without being paid. Miners and other workers are refusing to allow these entitlements and the social relations they embody to be dismantled without waging massive battles to defend them.

Yeltsin has repeatedly been forced to back off pressing for draconian policies for fear of setting social forces in motion that could spiral out of control. Last March, the day after former deputy prime Minister Aleksie Kudrin declared plans to fire 208,000 teachers and medical workers, Yeltsin denied the announcement.

A recent national survey of 6,000 people conducted by Sociology and Parliamentary Institute in Russia found that 11 percent of

the respondents said they would support an armed uprising against the government and 12 percent of the participants said they were ready to join a strike.

Regime of permanent instability

In a move to save his own skin, Yeltsin dismissed his entire cabinet on August 23, including Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko, who had announced the devaluation of the ruble and the default on the treasury bonds. This action came five months after Yeltsin's last cabinet shuffle. This time the Russian president rehired Viktor Chernomyrdin as prime minister, the same man he had dismissed from that position on March 23. But the Duma, the lower house of parliament, where the opposition Communist Party and its allies hold a majority of seats, rejected Chernomyrdin by a vote of 253 to 94 on August 31. "Russia today is, in essence, on the verge of economic and political breakdown," Chernomyrdin declared prior to that vote.

Before he was fired, Boris Nemtsov, the former deputy prime minister, said the government planned to implement the IMF program on August 24. This program included shutting down insolvent banks and oil and other companies and inviting foreign investors to take control of some of these institutions.

Yeltsin gave no official explanation for the August 23 cabinet firings. According to the *Financial Times*, Yeltsin's "formal justification" for dismissing his entire cabinet on March 23 was in response to simmering outrage among working people over back wages. "We cannot allow wage arrears to accumulate," Yeltsin asserted the day after that earlier cabinet reshuffle.

Workers in Russia are owed more than \$11 billion in back wages. A barter system has spread throughout the country — a phe-

nomenon not found in a society where capitalist social relations predominate. The *Wall Street Journal* reported August 28 that "an official survey of 210 enterprises at the backbone of the economy estimated that barter, debt-swaps and other nonmonetary deals accounted for 73% of transactions in 1996 and 1997. The businesses surveyed paid only 8% of their taxes with real — what Russians call 'live' money."

Millions of workers who have not been paid in months, or even years, survive on garden plots and living on their parents pensions. According to official figures in 1997, some 25-30 percent of Russians now live in poverty. Male life expectancy dropped from nearly 64 in 1990 to 58 in 1995 — roughly on par with Kenya.

Russia's population has been declining by about 1 million a year, with the death rate overcoming the birth rate by 1.6 times. According to John Gray, in his recently published book, *False Dawn*, Russia's population "is likely to fall by about a fifth over the next thirty years, 147 million to 123 million — an unparalleled demographic collapse."

Gray added, "The life expectancy of a Russian male aged sixteen a century ago was higher than his counterpart today. Despite two world wars, a civil war, famine and millions of deaths in the purges and the Gulag, a sixteen-year-old male had a 2 percent higher chance of reaching sixty than he does today."

Workers step up strikes, protests

In response to this social catastrophe engendered by the so far fruitless effort to integrate Russia into the world capitalist system, protests and demands for payment of back wages by working people are mounting. Coal miners, who have been camping outside the government building in Moscow,

blocked key railways in May, paralyzing the country's transportation network. In the far eastern port of Vladivostok, teachers, ambulance staff, and other workers have organized strike and protest actions every week for months. Doctors in the Orenburg region have been on a hunger strike for two weeks and teachers plan a strike in September. And unpaid soldiers have started shooting their commanding officers.

Russian trade unions are planning a general strike on October 7 to demand back pay and protest the IMF austerity program. "If the government wants total war, it's going to get it," declared Andrei Isayev, a leader of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions. It is the determined resistance of these workers that worries capitalist politicians and pundits from Washington to Bonn and Tokyo.

As he pondered the social convulsions in Russia, *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman noted in an August 29 column that the "basic pillars" that have defined stability of the world capitalist system are falling apart, including the "notion that Russia had made an irreversible leap from Communism to free-market capitalism."

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Sydney: 19 Terry St., Surry Hills 2010. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket Post Office, NSW 1240. Tel: 02-9281-3297. Compuserve: 106450,2216

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 0171-928-7993. Compuserve:

101515,2702

Manchester: Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Postal code: M4 4AA. Tel: 0161-839-1766. Compuserve: 106462,327

CANADA

Montreal: 4581 Saint-Denis. Postal code: H2J 2L4. Tel: (514) 284-7369. Compuserve: 104614,2606

Toronto: 851 Bloor St. West. Postal code: M6G 1M3. Tel: (416) 533-4324. Compuserve: 103474,13

Vancouver: 3967 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3P3. Tel: (604) 872-8343. Compuserve: 103430,1552

FRANCE

Paris: Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 47-26-58-21. Compuserve: 73504,442

ICELAND

Reykjavik: Klapparstíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. INTERNET: gphssg@treknet.is

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075. Compuserve: 100035,3205

Christchurch: 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055. Compuserve: 100250,1511

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362

Thought for the week — “Experts fear the crippling currency and debt problems engulfing much of East Asia could affect the economies of many more nations, igniting political instability and possibly even a retreat from capitalism. Foreign woes could also damage relatively strong U.S. and European economies.” — *Los Angeles Times*, August.



Harry Ring

ing political instability and possibly even a retreat from capitalism. Foreign woes could also damage relatively strong U.S. and European economies.” — *Los Angeles Times*, August.

Competing with Kevorkian? — The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Dept. said a study indi-

cates that 10 percent of those killed by deputies had goaded the shooters because they wanted to die. Officials were reluctant to provide evidence of how this was determined, but noted glumly that suicide-by-cop leaves cops with a lasting emotional trauma.

Skip the crack — Los Angeles area police said a masked gunman walked into a gift shop and, at gunpoint, took 40 Beanie Babies with a street value of \$5,000.

‘And be proud’ — “Keep a low profile. Avoid luggage tags that may identify you as an American.... Drive with your car windows closed on crowded streets; bombs can be thrown through an open window.... Keep a mental note of safe areas, such as police stations, hotels, and hospitals.” — A State Dept.

“Worldwide Caution” to U.S. travelers.

Somebody's paranoid — “With fewer than 500 days left before the year 2000, law enforcement officials are increasingly concerned that widespread paranoia about the millennium could touch off a clash between the government and domestic terrorists. ‘I worry every day that something could happen somewhere,’ said Robert Bliutner, section chief of the FBI's domestic terrorism unit.” — News item.

Mad money — Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft, the biggest corporation in cyberspace, plans to sell 700,000 shares of his common stock for an expected \$73.3 million. A few weeks earlier he filed to sell 7.9 million shares valued at \$834.3 million. A spokesperson ex-

plained: “Mr. Allen regularly sells small portions of his Microsoft stake.”

Chapter in imperialist history — Between 1850 and 1967, successive British governments permitted more than 100,000 children to be shipped abroad, without parental consent, to repopulate various parts of the empire.

Ranging in age from three to 17, the youngsters were taken from children's homes and sent to counterparts, mainly in Australia and New Zealand. An official said, “It beggars belief.”

Hope she doesn't owe for crutches — “A German dentist snatched the dentures from the mouth of a former patient in a restaurant in Weisbaden after she ignored requests for payment.” —

News item.

The ‘Homeland’ — An August 5 AP dispatch from Jerusalem says hundreds of Holocaust survivors “live in bleak conditions in Israeli mental hospitals — while millions of dollars in German reparations accumulate in accounts controlled by the government.

Doctors say government trustees refuse to allow the money to be used to improve the survivors' lives, turning down requests for televisions, air conditioners, and holiday parties.”

Sort of equal — Women in England are just about as likely as men to win job promotions. However, male promotions are accompanied, on average, by a 20 percent pay increase. For women, the gain is less than ten percent.

Vanguard role of Blacks in next American revolution

The expert below is from the book *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*. In the section titled, “Prospects for Socialism in America,” the book takes up the centrality of the struggle of oppressed nationalities — Blacks in particular — in the overall fight for the emancipation of the working-class in the United States. This section was adopted as part of the main political resolution of the Socialist Workers Party's 27th National Convention in 1975. It is copyright © Pathfinder Press, reprinted with permission.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

The oppressed nationalities and national minorities have a dual character. They constitute a growing percentage of the working class itself and at the same time they are the most important allies of the working class. In this respect they differ from the oppressed layers of the petty bourgeoisie, and all other allies except the women. To see only one side of this duality, and to ignore the other, would be a fatal error for a revolutionary party. Oppressed nationalities and national minorities are exploited as proletarians. This exploitation is intensified by their pariah status since they are at the same time oppressed as distinct peoples. The struggle against this twofold oppression is one of the central driving forces of the coming American revolution. It is closely intertwined with all the problems and issues facing the American working class.

Their importance as allies of the proletariat stems from several factors: National oppression and the racism used to justify it are rooted in the historical development of American capitalism, in the uncompleted tasks of the second American revolution (the Civil War, which emancipated Afro-Americans from slavery but failed to lead to full equality), and in the rise of imperialism with its self-justifying racist ideology.

National oppression is used by the ruling class to divide the working class, to buy off leaders and privileged strata, thus weakening both the class consciousness and political independence of the workers, and bolstering capitalist rule. With or without legal sanction, a major component of the industrial reserve army has been kept in a pariah status. The overwhelmingly proletarian composition and superexploitation of the oppressed nationalities and national minorities mean that they will be the most consistent and cohesive of all allies of the working class in its struggles. More and more they will furnish leadership in the fight to transform the labor movement into a fighting social movement, using labor's power to back the struggles of all the oppressed.

‘Jim Crow must go’

In the postwar years American imperialism drove to expand its domination in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. To do so it needed a new, less racist image. In addition, the changes taking place in the economic structure of southern society created the need for new forms of social control. The more alert representatives of the American ruling

class began to recognize that Jim Crow, the southern system of legal segregation maintained through legal and extralegal terror, had ceased to be the most effective means of perpetuating the second-class status of the Black proletariat.

Under pressure from growing mass resentment, the U.S. armed forces were formally desegregated during the Korean War, and then in 1954 the Supreme Court declared school segregation unconstitutional.

But it was only the decade-long direct-action struggles, mobilizing millions of Blacks and their supporters, that downed Jim Crow. Their power and determination played a decisive role in altering Black consciousness and self-confidence. This was reflected in the rise of Black power and Black nationalist sentiments; in the popularity of Malcolm X; in the upsurges of other oppressed minorities and social groupings; in the moral questioning that has so deeply motivated the youth radicalization; and in the modification of the opinions of masses of white workers.

The effects of the mass struggle to end segregation, followed by the powerful rise of Black nationalist sentiment, were subsequently seen in the vanguard role played by Black GIs in opposition to the Vietnam War....

The ghettos explode

Rebellions in the Black communities, beginning in New York in 1964, spreading to Watts in 1965, and Newark and Detroit in 1967, and culminating in the 1968 nationwide outbreaks after the death of Martin Luther King, ushered in a new stage of struggle in which Black nationalist ideas spread rapidly. These spontaneous upsurges, along with intensified struggles by Black students and other sectors of the Black community, forced more concessions from the ruling class and brought forward new leaders who became targets of stepped-up government repression.

Riding the crest of the postwar boom, the ruling class co-opted a layer of the leaders or potential leaders of the rising Black radicalization by granting them economic, political, and social concessions.

The percentage of Black enrollment in the country's colleges and universities tripled in a five-year period at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s. “Great Society” dollars were poured into poverty program funds, a good part of which went into salaries of “aspiring leaders,” Black and white.

The face of the Democratic Party also underwent a significant change. The threat posed by the unconditional opposition of Malcolm X to the Democratic Party and the first halting steps toward independent Black political action, such as the Michigan Freedom Now Party and the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, was adroitly countered. From the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party to the election of Black mayors in a half-dozen major industrial cities, to the emergence of the Congressional Black Caucus, and the election of more than 1,100 Black officials in the deep South—where less than a decade ago the masses of Blacks were barred even from voting—the lure of “working within the (two-party) system” attracted the overwhelming majority of a generation of potential Black leaders.

The following features should be added to the picture of the crisis of leadership of

the Black movement:

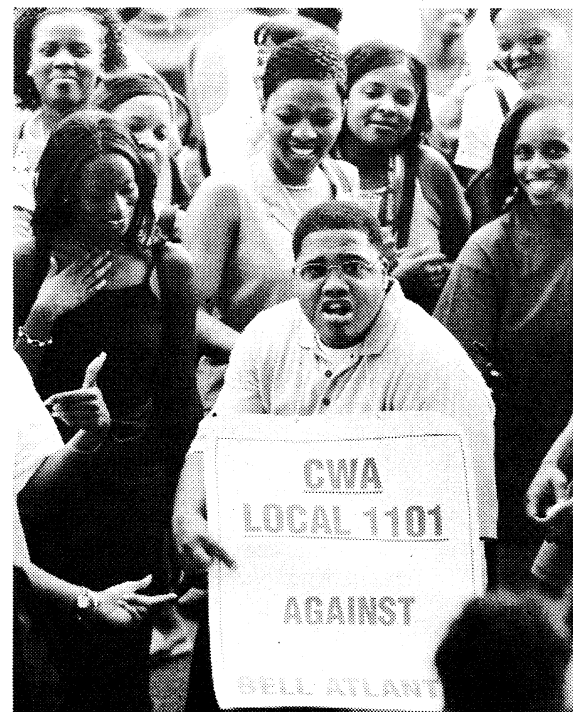
1. The total default of the organized labor movement, whose class-collaborationist leadership was unable to rise above its own narrow concern of maintaining its privileged position and refused to mobilize the power of the labor movement in support of the Black struggle.

2. The calculated policy of the powers that be of eliminating any potential individual leaders—such as Martin Luther King, who inspired the Black masses to struggle, or Malcolm X, who was beginning to urge Black people toward independent political action against capitalist oppression.

3. The failure to effectively meet government harassment and murder of a layer of leaders in the generation of the 1960s. Groups like the Black Panthers, whose ultraleftism turned them away from any mass perspective, were left defenseless before the government's cold-blooded use of agent provocateurs and terror.

4. The numerical weakness of the revolutionary Marxists, which prevented them from providing a revolutionary leadership except in the realm of program and socialist perspectives.

But despite this crisis, the rise of Black nationalism and the massive ghetto explosions brought about a historic advance in the self-confidence of Blacks and their image of themselves as a people. The upsurges also changed the way white Americans viewed Afro-Americans. Despite the lack of adequate leadership of the Black movement, its power won numerous concessions and registered advances through-



Militant/Megan Arney

Overwhelming proletarian composition means Blacks will be the most consistent allies of the working class. Above, Communication Workers of America prepare strike at Bell Atlantic August 7.

out the decade of the 1960s. This has been symbolized in the at least token participation of Blacks at every level of society and culture, from TV commercials to sports, from elected union posts to the Supreme Court. In the late 1960s even the income differential between Black and white workers narrowed by a tiny, though perceptible, amount. Blacks began fighting for preferential quotas, training, and upgrading in industry and the educational system, as necessary and irreplaceable steps along the road to real equality.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

25 CENTS THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

September 14, 1973

SEPT. 4 — The emergency bill designed to force the 56,000 non-operating rail workers back to work was rammed through parliament in the early hours of Sept. 1. By today most workers had returned to work. It appears that there will be no repetition of the 1966 experience, when thousands of rail workers defied parliament and stayed on strike for a week. The “non-ops” are bitter at the government strike-breaking move, but they have been worn down by weeks of rotating strikes.

The terms of the government bill represent a defeat for the rail workers. They had originally demanded a 27 percent raise over two years; parliament gave them only 17.6 percent. The bill also removes the right to strike from 36,000 other rail workers.

Thousands of rail workers — many of whom had staged wildcat strikes since January against the delays in negotiations and the refusal of the rail barons to bargain — staged demonstrations across the country protesting government strike-breaking attempts.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

September 13, 1948

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 4 — Every port on the Pacific Coast from San Pedro California to Seattle, Washington, is tied-up as of midnight Sept. 1. Not a single ship moves as 12,000 CIO longshoremen and 10,000 members of the Independent Marine Firemen's Union and CIO Marine Cooks and Stewards march the picket lines.

The longshoremen and firemen and cooks were forced on strike by the adamant refusal of the ship operators and waterfront employers to recognize the principle of the union hiring hall, or to budge from their position that the unions continue their no-strike pledge and tie themselves to the vicious compulsory arbitration machinery of the old contract. The major demands of the longshoremen are as follows: 1) The hiring hall set-up as is. 2) 18-cents an hour pay increase, bringing the straight-time scale from \$1.67 to \$1.85. Overtime after 6 hours at time-and-a-half. 3) Elimination of all penalty clauses of the contract especially those applying to stoppage of work.

Hands off Korea!

Hands off north Korea! That's the response workers and young people around the world should have to the latest threats by Washington and Tokyo against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Japanese government's decision to cut off its minimal food aid to north Korea — which faces shortages as a result of a series of natural disasters — on the pretext of weapons tests by the DPRK government is cynical and hypocritical. It is an affront to a people colonized with brutal force by Japanese imperialism for most of the first half of this century.

The DPRK faces continual threats and provocations from Washington, Tokyo, and the south Korean regime in Seoul. This includes military maneuvers involving tens of thousands troops off the north Korean coast and the permanent stationing of 40,000 U.S. troops in the south, whose arsenal includes nuclear weapons. For more than two decades, the Korea has been physically divided by a huge wall running 150 miles across the entire width of the peninsula. This wall was erected by the south Korean government, with Washington's help.

This imperialist aggression against the DPRK does not

cease because the Korean people — after decades of Japanese rule followed by U.S. attempts to take over the peninsula following World War II — had the audacity to claim their country for themselves. They fought the U.S. armed forces to a stalemate in the 1950–53 war instigated by Washington, at the cost of some 4 million Korean lives.

Washington's latest accusations that the DPRK government is building an underground nuclear weapons facility — even before the cement is allegedly poured — should also be denounced. The world's largest imperial bully, and the only government to ever drop atomic bombs on human beings, has no right to dictate how any nation can defend itself.

The north Korean government has consistently sought to advance the fight for the reunification of the Korean peninsula — which is the desire of the big majority of the Korean people. Working people, particularly in the United States, should demand that Washington remove all its troops and weapons from Korea now, end its criminal embargo of the DPRK, and support the reunification of the country, which has been kept divided for half a century by U.S. force.

Join the Young Socialists

Continued from front page

more speedup, longer hours, and lower wages, while their government tries to slash social gains and democratic rights. Many young people are reacting to these evils of capitalism and looking for ways to fight back.

Youth are less resigned to the dog-eat-dog competition under the profit system than many older workers who have gone through the retreat of the labor movement over the last period. They are repelled by the alienation and inhumanity inherent in the capitalist system. They see their future at stake and are often the first to begin fighting for a world without racism, sexism, exploitation, and war. Marx and Engels were in their mid-twenties when they first linked up with experienced fighting workers. After a few years of common experience, the two young revolutionaries were asked to draft the world program of an international organization made up of workers from across Europe that gave birth to the Communist Manifesto.

Today more young fighters are among the militant workers on picket lines from UPS to McDonald's. They are among the first to react to Washington's war threats and bombings such as the recent attack on Afghanistan and Sudan. They are taking leadership roles in the fight for Puerto Rican independence, the defense of bilingual education and affirmative action, and struggles against police

brutality. Over the Labor Day weekend many will be taking part in the Million Youth March in New York or the Million Youth Movement in Atlanta as a show of opposition to the racism and degradation capitalism breeds. Many others will be part of union parades and actions.

Rebellious youth are beginning to search for allies in their struggles. They begin to turn toward the fighting power of the working class and the example of the Cuban revolution. Cuba is the one place in the world today where the working class holds state power *and* has a revolutionary leadership that seeks to advance the interests of workers and farmers throughout the world.

Young people today need a socialist youth organization that will respond and participate in struggles where working people and youth are fighting back. Where they can collectively become better fighters. The Young Socialists is a nationwide organization of young workers and students that sees the importance today of understanding and marching within the history and continuity of the communist movement. The YS in California is hosting a West Coast conference September 5–6 where young people from the region will meet to discuss these questions and chart a course of action for building such an organization. You can be part of this historic deed. Join the Young Socialists today!

Pilots walk out at Air Canada

Continued from front page

Starting in the third year, pilots get an additional profit share amount determined by the revenue generated on the flights they fly. According to Gunn, about 600 pilots started at Air Canada since 1995. The pilots are demanding a two-year contract with a 9 percent increase in salary each year to close the gap between their income and their counterparts at other North American carriers. The company has offered 3.5, 4, and 3.5 percent in the first three years of a five-year contract.

Air Canada pilots had given wage and work rule concessions in the early 1990s, along with other airline workers, when the company cried poverty. In 1997 the company posted \$427 million profits.

The pilots are fighting for work rule changes that directly affect flight safety. Currently their duty time, the time from push-off to landing, is as high as 85–90 hours a month. Actual working time, including flight preparation and training, is double that amount. This is well over the

industry average of 75–78 hours per month. For the company, this means a leaner workforce. For the pilots, it means increased fatigue. Some pilots report being away from home as many as 20 days a month.

ACPA is also demanding increased flight crews for longer flights to ensure safety. Gunn said that today the same two pilots fly both the take-off and landing on a 14-hour flight. The association is also fighting to stop cuts in training time on simulation equipment, which help pilots learn to deal with emergency situations.

The big-business media has worked hard to turn working people and others against the strike. Stories of honeymooners being stranded and children trying to fly home to return to school abound.

Flight attendants and other airline workers have stopped by the picket line in Toronto to extend their support.

Susan Berman is a member of the Canadian Auto Workers Local 1459.

Seattle: 'Defend affirmative action'

Continued from front page

prised a sizable portion of the crowd.

The march and rally provided a good opportunity for supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign to introduce the slate of candidates to workers, professionals, and youth in attendance. Members of the Communist League from Vancouver, as well as Young Socialists and other youth, helped staff the literature table and talk to students and young workers about the need for a fighting campaign by labor to overcome the divisions in the working class by race.

Cornelius Pope, a junior at Pacific Lutheran University and organizer of the college's Black Student Union (BSU), was particularly interested in bringing the socialist campaign to his campus and BSU meetings when school resumes.

As part of the discussion around defeating I-200, the campaign issued a statement calling for the defeat of that legislation and for an extension of affirmative action, particularly quotas, through actions by the working class.

This opinion was not shared by many of the speakers at the rally who called for "fairness" and "equity." The closeness of the election, with the primaries coming up in September, and awareness by many demonstrators of the racist measures carried out in California and Texas under the authority of similar initiatives, provided for a rich discussion.

Members of the Young Socialists from Seattle, Vancouver, and San Francisco distributed information about the upcoming Young Socialists Regional Conference to be held September 5–6 in the Bay Area and encouraged fighters to attend.

London moves to restrict rights in Ireland and Britain

BY PAUL DAVIES

MANCHESTER, England — The British government of Prime Minister Anthony Blair announced a new package of repressive laws September 2 as part of its attempts to undermine the democratic rights of working people in Britain and to shore up London's rule in the north of Ireland.

The new legislation will give the courts the power to use the opinion of a police officer as evidence to convict someone of membership in a banned organization. It will also give the courts the power to seize the goods and property of anyone convicted of belonging to a proscribed organization, and will make it a criminal offense under British law to conspire to commit an offense while in another country. The proposed legislation also restricts the right to silence for those arrested on suspicion of "terrorism."

Blair boasted that "we will have the toughest antiterrorist measures in the whole island of Ireland that we have ever seen," referring to simultaneous plans by the Irish government to also restrict democratic rights in the Irish Republic. The government of the Republic of Ireland under Bertie Ahern will give cops the power to interrogate suspects for up to four days and will increase the protection offered to those who testify in court on behalf of the police.

Martin McGuinness, Sinn Fein member of Parliament for Mid-Ulster, condemned the new proposals as "internment under another guise." Internment without trial was a policy widely used by the British government in the 1970s to try to break the struggle to end British rule in Northern Ireland. Thousands were routinely interned and subject to beatings and various forms of torture.

McGuinness, whose party is leading the fight for a free, united Ireland, stated, "Repressive legislation, like that previously introduced, is wrong and only succeeds in creating the conditions for a litany of miscarriages of justice."

Martin O'Brien of the Committee for the Administration of Justice commented, "To convict someone solely on the word of a police officer and the accused's own silence is in breach of the right to a fair trial.... The extensive use of emergency powers has allowed the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] to effectively intern suspects by remand; the consequences of allowing the RUC the choice of who to convict is even starker." The RUC is the pro-British police force in Northern Ireland.

The bill allows the government a sweeping definition of those that it wishes to ban, including organizations that they claim are "promoting or encouraging" terrorism.

Writing in the Irish republican newspaper *An Phoblacht*, Sinn Fein councilor Mary Nelis commented on British and Irish government claims that the repressive measures are aimed at those who carried out a recent car bombing in the town of Omagh. "Blair and Ahern know, as we do, that those responsible for Omagh...are finished in this country," she wrote. "But the legislation will only serve to give increased powers to those who are not finished in this country, the British Intelligence Services... the RUC and the No unionists," who voted against the so-called Good Friday Agreement. The term "unionist" is used for those who support the continued "union" of Northern Ireland with the United Kingdom.

"The net results of this situation," Nelis continued, "will be to set Irish people against each other through North/South cooperation in collusion, spies, 'dirty tricks' operations, felon baiting, and shifting the onus of blame from the government onto the people."

Some members of the British Parliament have raised doubts about the contents of the proposed new laws. Former Labour Northern Ireland spokesman Kevin McNamara has indicated that he intends to propose amendments to the bill.

The new attacks on democratic rights come in the face of continuing gains won by nationalists. The British government's Parades Commission was forced to ban a march by ultrarightist Ian Paisley along the nationalist Garvaghy Road on August 15 and to prohibit a march by a similar organization, the "Black Perceptory," through the village of Dunloy on the same day.

The release of political prisoners, including many republicans convicted in non-jury Diplock courts, will begin September 7, despite calls from some Unionist and Conservative Party politicians that the releases be suspended following the Omagh bombing.

The new British government legislation will be debated as U.S. president William Clinton visits Northern Ireland. Commenting on the visit, Brendan O'Neill from the Catholic neighborhood of Andersonstown in west Belfast said, "People say [Clinton] is the most powerful person in the world, but it's something that the people of Northern Ireland or Ireland must sort out, not him."

Paul Davies is a member of the Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union in Manchester.

Australia workers strike food warehouse

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers

Canada (PSAC), held protest rallies and noon hour demonstrations outside government offices in Ottawa, Hull, Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Toronto, Vancouver, as well as in cities in New Brunswick and Cape Breton. The protests were the immediate response of hundreds of

plant with scabs, but workers say production is nowhere near normal levels. One striker said that there was only one truck at the loading dock the last time he was on picket duty, as compared to a dozen or more before the strike.

The company has created an almost a military atmosphere around the plant. High-powered lights stand over the picket shanties. The pickets are under constant video surveillance, and they report that the company uses supersensitive microphones that can pick up the workers' conversations on the picket line. Trucks entering and leaving the plant are escorted by black-uniformed guards, who also patrol the entrances to the plant.

While the strikers do not know the details of where the negotiations stand now, the major bone of contention at this point seems to be over the "disciplinary" measures the company wants to take for cases of picket line "misbehavior." Initially the company wanted to fire several workers. It has backed off from that stance, but the union is insisting that all disciplinary charges be dropped.

New Zealand workers picket for 40-hour week

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — "You don't know how to fix it — go out onto the picket line" was the advice of workers at the Sleepyhead factory in Otahuhu, Auckland, to the one tradesperson who refused to join the strike. Sleepyhead produces beds for local and export markets.

The story was passed on by two of the production workers from the plant who joined the picket line of five Engineers Union members during their lunch break August 12. The strike action began August 10 to protest Sleepyhead's proposals to pay overtime rates of time and a half after 47 hours, instead of 40 as at present.

The dispute, which has been simmering since the workers' contracts expired in May, involves the entire workforce of 250. Most production workers belong to Tradesec, which incorporates the former furniture workers union. The tradespeople belong to the Engineers Union, and the National Distribution Union covers the stores. A minority of workers are not union members.

On the recommendation of union officials, the maintenance workers took the strike action, while the produc-

tion and stores workers are refusing overtime and have pledged to sustain the striking workers with financial and moral support.

About "30 to 40 percent of the production workers do overtime," said the Engineers Union delegate told the *Militant*. The tradespeople "do a lot of overtime — that's when the work is done — when the machines are stopped," he explained. Most production workers earn around NZ\$9 an hour (NZ\$1 = US\$.48). Picket Garry Sands emphasized that "the working week is supposed to be 40 hours!"

On the fifth morning of the strike, 20 workers in the springs department spilled out onto the picket line, demanding the reinstatement of a worker just sacked on allegations of theft. They forced the company to reverse the firing on the same morning, and returned to work. On the same day, the protest was strengthened by several workers from the afternoon shift, who joined the picket after going home to sleep.

Local papers have given the dispute front-page coverage. The *Manukau Daily News* quoted general manager Alan Warner as saying "we need to be more efficient."

In the same report, a worker explained that "the factory is already close to third world conditions.... The toilets stink and there are no towels for people to dry their hands.... If we give in they will continue to chip away at our rights."

One picket sign reads "Beep your support," and many motorists do on this major Auckland road.

Raytheon workers win pay raise

LOWELL, Massachusetts — Some 2,700 members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 1505 who work at 9 Raytheon Company plants in Massachusetts ratified a new con-

tract by about a 3-to-1 margin here August 30. The old contract had expired hours earlier.

Many workers came to the union meeting with T-shirts on that depicted a coiled snake and read "If provoked, I will strike." Workers had also been wearing the same T-shirts to work.

In the weeks leading up to the contract expiration the union had informational picket lines at various Raytheon plants. Raytheon is a manufacturer of reader and military equipment, including Patriot missiles. On August 20 an informational picket was hit by a car and died the next day. Some workers at the contract meeting wore IBEW buttons with black tape across them in memory of their fellow worker.

The new two-year contract covers 3,800 members and calls for raises of 5 percent in the first year and 4 percent in the second year. Workers had not had a raise in four years. Audry Lindsey, who has worked for Raytheon for 20 years, explained she "liked the contract" because of "the raises and because it (the company) threatened to go after sick days and vacation days and wasn't able to."

Lindsey also explained the new contract, "takes down some fences." That is, it expanded the recall rights of the union members.

Not everybody thought the contract was good. One worker explained, "we still have the two tier," referring to workers who do the same job but get paid a less.

Linda Harris, member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union in Sydney; Jacquie Henderson, member of the International Association of Machinists in Vancouver; Tony Prince, member of USWA Local 188 in Cleveland; Frank Evans in Auckland; and Ted Leonard in Boston, contributed to this column.

ON THE PICKET LINE

around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

SYDNEY, Australia — Warehouse workers who are members of the National Union of Workers have been picketing Davids, Australia's largest wholesale grocery distributor. They are on strike to defend their jobs and working conditions. Four hundred workers at Davids' centers in Sydney and Canberra walked off the job on July 8 protesting the company's attitude as they tried to negotiate an agreement.

Davids was recently taken over by Metro, a South African-owned company. Pushed by competition with other distributors, the bosses are demanding an increase in the normal working hours and the right to hire of unlimited numbers of casual (temporary) workers. The company also wants to introduce a system under which workers who do not meet new performance standards would get two warnings and then sacked. Already the workforce at the Blacktown warehouse has been reduced from 600 to 270 in the last six years through speedup.

There is a very high injury rate because of the work pace. Before the strike, one forklift driver was taken off the job because he refused to drive as fast as the bosses wanted.

Philip Mumby, a union delegate at the Blacktown warehouse, said that during the busy season 30 percent of the workforce is casual. Up to 2,000 different casuals go through the plant in one year. Mumby said that the company told casual workers who signed up to the union not to come back.

The union has been trying to negotiate a new agreement for eight months. Workers were on rolling stoppages for two weeks before they went out on strike.

On the first day of the strike truck drivers, members of the Transport Workers Union, honored the picket lines. The next day under pressure from the trucking company the drivers agreed to go through. But it took 60 cops to force the trucks through the picket line, though, and 41 workers were arrested as they tried to stop the trucks. They were released without charge but the company sacked everyone who was taken away by the police.

Casual workers are being bused to work every day. The first week a group of 15 casuals employed by Davids refused to cross the picket line, but when the company found out they sacked them. Strikers said that only about a quarter of the normal truck loads are getting out. However, Davids is shipping from their warehouses in Melbourne and Brisbane. Supporters from other unions have been coming down to the picket lines, particularly members of the Maritime Union whose recent battle on the picket lines won mass support and was an inspiration for other workers.

Workers demand Ottawa implement pay equity

In cities across Canada, angry federal government workers called in sick or walked off the job August 27. The workers, organized by the Public Service Alliance of

unionists to the government's announcement that it is going to court to fight the July 29 pay equity ruling that ordered Ottawa to address the wage gap between female and male dominated public service jobs.

On July 29 a human rights tribunal ruled that the government must pay up to 13 years back wages and interest to almost 200,000 of its workers and retirees. The government announced its appeal August 27, complaining of the expense involved estimating the cost between \$4 and \$5 billion. Treasury Board President Marcel Masse explained the government's objections: "We believe that the formula used by the human rights tribunal is unfair and overcompensates."

More than 85 percent of the affected workers are women and 80 percent work in some of the lowest paid jobs in public service, earning less than \$20,000 a year. "We are finally getting respect," Christine Collins, a clerical worker in Ottawa, Ontario said July 29, at a union-organized rally of celebration.

The ruling was the first major pay equity victory for the workers after being tied up for 14 years in court battles with the government's Treasury Board to apply the 1978 Human Rights Act. This Act ruled it illegal to pay women less than men for work of "equal value."

In 1985 PSAC filed a complaint against the Treasury Board with the Canadian Human Rights Commission to close the wage gap between female and male-dominated jobs in the public sector. While the unionists won a decision from the commission in 1991, the Treasury Board launched a series of legal attacks to derail the case. On the eve of the last election the board tried to get PSAC to settle for \$800 million. Then the government used a March 1998 decision by a federal court judge quashing a tribunal hearing into pay discrimination at Bell Canada to pressure PSAC to settle. The union refused and instead held out for the tribunal decision.

Both the PSAC and the government have noted that the July 29 decision could have far-reaching implications for all federally regulated industries, including transportation and communication companies, and that its impact is being felt beyond the public sector. The unionists are demanding government drop its appeal and pay up.

Steelworkers strike at chemical plant in Ohio

Approximately 200 members of USWA Local 7334 have been on strike at Millenium Inorganic Chemicals in Ashtabula, Ohio, since May. The company is attempting to impose major changes in work practices at the plant, including 12-hour shifts, job combinations, and contracting out of several categories of jobs. Millenium is a major producer of titanium dioxide.

At the Local 7334 annual retirees picnic August 15, the strikers' general mood was one of determination to see the strike through to the end, although several expressed a desire to get it over with after 15 weeks. No members of the local have crossed the picket line. A few workers said that the fact that jobs are relatively plentiful has helped them to hold out longer, as many have been found temporary jobs.

The company is trying to run the

LETTERS

Natives protest uranium

A litter over a year ago, the Dene First Nations of Great Bear Lake in the Canadian Northwest Territories learned that the uranium they had helped to transport from the nearby government-owned Port Radium mine was used to build the bombs dropped on Japan at the end of World War II. This has since been confirmed by Canadian government officials.

On August 6, a delegation of the Dene from Great Bear traveled to the Hiroshima Memorial Service to explain to the Japanese people that this horrible act perpetrated on them by the U.S. government, and supported by the Allies, was also a terrible experience for the Dene people.

Beginning in 1943, while white miners and laboratory workers were routinely tested for uranium contamination, the Dene "cookies" as they were called carried sacks of

uranium on their backs without any of the protective clothing and showers provided to white workers. The lethal dust was brought home to their families. As one of the few carriers still alive says, "Nobody said nothing about it being dangerous. We didn't know what this stuff was. We didn't know what cancer was. Our people used to live a long time.... The majority of our people have died of cancer."

When the mine was closed down in 1960, 1.7 million tons of uranium ore was still left to contaminate water, fish, and soil in and around Great Bear Lake. Now young Dene, outraged by the government's racist contempt for the lives of the past generation and of their own, have painstakingly carried out interviews with survivors and their families and are demanding acknowledgment of responsibility from the federal government, disclosure of all documents related to the mine, compen-

sation for spouses and children of those who have died of cancer, and a comprehensive health, environmental and social assessment to be done by independent experts acceptable to the Dene.

However, Peter Brown, the Director of Uranium and Radioactive Waste at the Department of Natural Resources says it could be difficult to prove a link between the radioactive material carried by the men and cancer.

The government said it would investigate the Dene claims.

Bea Bryant
Blenheim, Ontario

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

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Auto workers hold sit down strike Dodge plant in Detroit

Supreme Court in Canada declares that Quebec has no right to secede

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

TORONTO — The nine judges of Canada's Federal Supreme Court handed down a unanimous ruling August 20 declaring Quebec has no right to secede from Canada, either under Canadian or international law.

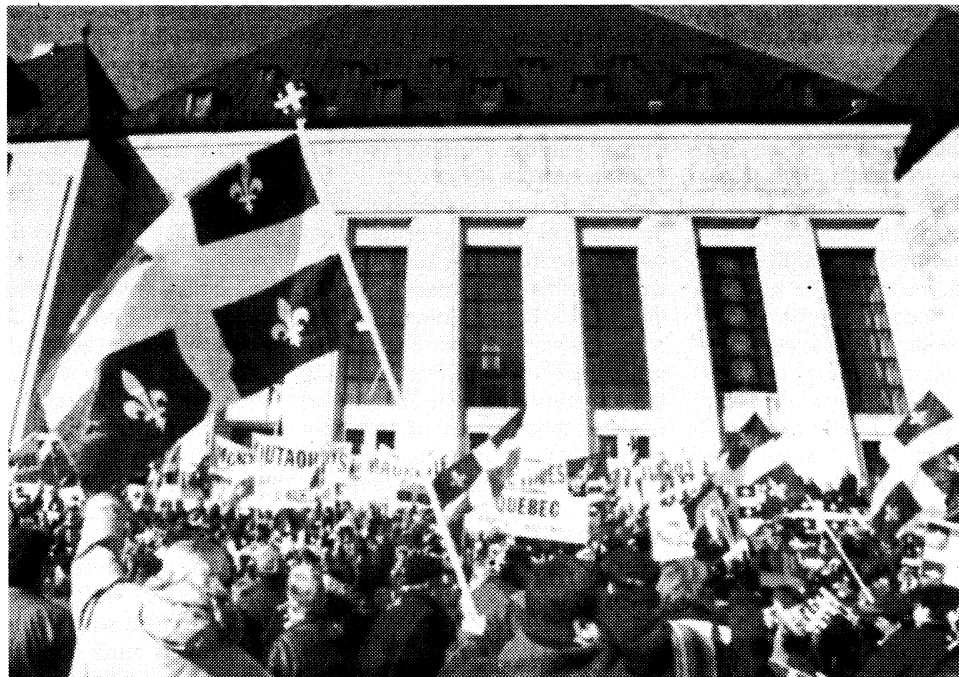
They opined that "the Quebec population certainly shares many of the characteristics of a people" but "does not meet the threshold of a colonial people or an oppressed people" and so it has no right to self-determination. The ruling states that if there were "a clear majority vote in Quebec on a clear question in favor of secession," negotiations between Quebec and Canada would be required "to address the interests of the other provinces, the federal government and Quebec, and indeed the rights of all Canadians both within and outside Quebec, and specifically the rights of minorities."

A 1995 referendum calling for sovereignty for Quebec failed by a 1.6 percent margin, giving the Canadian rulers quite a scare. The big majority of Quebecois, who face oppression on the basis of their language, French, voted in favor of sovereignty.

Following the Supreme Court ruling, Canadian prime minister Jean Chrétien said the federal government would not recognize a simple majority of 50 percent plus one, and insisted that the word secession or separation be used in any "clear" referendum on the question. Stéphane Dion, federal intergovernmental affairs minister, spelled out that Ottawa would continue to rule Quebec unless all the Supreme Court conditions were met, regardless of the expressed desires of the Quebecois. He warned that if secession were posed, Quebec's present borders would not be considered unchangeable.

Refusing to recognize the legitimacy of the Supreme Court on this matter, the Quebec government and Quebec's ruling party, the pro-sovereignty Parti Quebecois, had boycotted the original court hearings. Nevertheless, PQ officials hailed the court ruling. Provincial premier Lucien Bouchard said, "The next time, men and women in Quebec will be able to vote Yes with the certainty that negotiations will take place and that everything will be put into place for an orderly transition toward sovereignty in respecting the rights of all citizens."

Jean Charest, leader of the Quebec Lib-



About 1,000 people demonstrated at Supreme Court hearings in Ottawa February 16, demanding the right of Quebec for independence from Canada.

eral Party, insisted that the key issues in Quebec are jobs and the economy, since Quebecois are not interested in another sovereignty "neverendum." Both French- and

English-language press presented the ruling as a signal that Ottawa was seeking diplomacy rather than confrontation. The French-language Montreal daily *La Presse* de-

scribed it as "a Solomon's judgment."

"Plan B backfires" announced the *Toronto Star*. Plan B was the supposed hard-line denial of Quebec rights to be pursued by the ruling federal Liberals after the near-win by sovereignist forces in the October 1995.

Guy Bouthillier, the Montreal president of the nationalist association Société St-Jean Baptiste, said the judgment "delivered the goods to the feds, while giving the appearance of being balanced." Referring to the Canadian army's occupation of Quebec in October 1970, Bouthillier declared the ruling would not stop the Quebecois' march toward their political destiny. "It didn't work with the army in 1970; it won't work now."

Quebec Federation of Labor president Clément Godbout said, "At bottom, this whole question is not of a legal or judicial nature, but of a political nature." Teachers' Federation President Lorraine Pagé criticized the court for acting in bad faith.

On the courthouse steps in Ottawa on the day of the judgment, a few individuals brandished signs declaring their views, both federalist and sovereignist. One hand-lettered placard read "9 wigs against 7 million tuques," referring to the 7 million people who live in Quebec.

Katy LeRougetel is a member of United Steelworkers of America in Toronto.

Communist League condemns court ruling

The following statement was issued August 24 by Michel Dugré and Elssa Martinez, candidates of the Communist League in Canada for mayor and city council of Montreal, Quebec, respectively.

All working people, labor organizations and defenders of democratic rights should unambiguously reject the August 20 ruling on Quebec by the Supreme Court of Canada. From beginning to end the whole operation is a complete negation of Quebec's right to self-determination.

Canada's highest court ruled that Quebec "is not an oppressed nation" inside Canada, that it can't "secede unilaterally" from under the Canadian constitution and international law, and that if there were "a clear majority vote on a clear question in favor of secession" negotiations would be required

between Quebec and the rest of Canada. This ruling gives in fact a veto power to Ottawa on any future referendum on Quebec sovereignty.

The first thing to say about this ruling is that, like the Canada's government in Ottawa, the Supreme Court of Canada does not have any legitimacy whatsoever on this matter. The seven million Quebecois are indeed an oppressed nation in Canada. It is them who should decide on their future, not a court and judges who are a central institution of their oppression. As Guy Bouthillier, president of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Montreal put it, "It is their court, it is their judges, it is their constitution. They delivered the goods."

Despite decades of struggle, the Quebecois are victims of systematic discrimination on the basis of their language, French. Even if Quebec is the second most industrialized province in Canada, it is also the poorest. Quebecois are subjected to inferior health and education services. And the situation is getting worse with the deepening capitalist crisis.

Over the last couple of years working people in Canada have seen growing numbers of anti-Quebecois, chauvinist incidents, like the flag waving silencing of a Quebecois sovereignist member of parliament in the House of Commons in Ottawa and the rabid campaign to force out the newly appointed director of the Ottawa Civic Hospital because he is a supporter of Quebec independence. These are reminders that the so-called "national tensions" in Canada are one-sided.

Canada's rulers have repeatedly denied Quebec's right to self-determination by force and violence, sending the army in many times. More recently, they organized campaigns of blackmail and intimidation to scare people in Quebec to remain in Canada. The Supreme Court ruling is just another chapter in this effort.

Canada's capitalist rulers have used and are using the oppression of the Quebecois as a source of massive surplus-profits by imposing second-class working and living condition to a quarter of Canada's population. They also use it to divide working people and prevent us from recognizing that we have a common interest in coming together in a common fight against their sys-

tem of oppression and exploitation.

One hundred and fifty years of struggle against this discrimination, this oppression, and this contempt has convinced a growing number of Quebecois that they should take their destiny into their own hands and form their own country. This desire for justice and equality should be actively supported by all working people in Canada. This is key for forging the kind of working-class unity that is necessary today to defend ourselves against the growing evils of a capitalist system mired in depression.

One step in that direction is to build solidarity with struggles that bring together working people from across the country, like the current strike by 5,000 pulp and paper workers in Ontario, Quebec, and Newfoundland against the giant Abitibi-Consolidated and the brewing confrontation between Air Canada and its 2,100 pilots.

Another step is to help distribute the *Militant* and other socialist publications that tell the truth about the struggle by the Quebecois against their oppression and to join our socialist campaign for mayor of Montreal — the only working-class voice in these elections.

Workers in Canada discuss court decision on Quebec

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

"It should only be the voice of French-speaking Quebecois who have the right to vote, to figure out whether they want independence," said Jacques Julien, a Steelworkers union member in Montreal. He was discussing Canada's Supreme Court ruling that a 50-percent-plus-one majority vote in favor of independence would not be valid.

Alphone Beaudoin, a member of the same Steelworkers local, said Quebec's ruling party, the pro-sovereignty Parti Quebecois, had always favored negotiations with the rest of Canada, "If they [Ottawa's rulers] refuse to negotiate, that's another thing."

An International Association of Machinists (IAM) member working at Avcorp in Vancouver bought a copy of the new pamphlet distributed by Pathfinder *Why Working People Should Support the Fight for Quebec Independence* from a co-worker. He is already a *Militant* subscriber and supports this fight because he opposes discrimination.

The pamphlet, published by the Communist League in Canada, reprints an article by John Steele that appeared in the April 13, 1998, issue of the *Militant*.

"I'm happy with the ruling," said Gyamfi Fofie to fellow Steelworkers members after work in Toronto. "It's as if my daughter wanted to leave home, and I made sure that she had a serious discussion with me before she made her decision. But if she says, 'Daddy, I'm leaving anyway' — what can I do, of course she can go."

"But you're assuming there's love between Quebec and Ottawa!" objected Guy Tremblay. "In reality, Ottawa discriminates against Quebec in everything." Two of his co-workers have bought the new pamphlet.

Debate at the Chrysler auto assembly line near Toronto got quite intense, reports Canadian Auto Workers member Vicky Mercier. A pro-Canada co-worker asked her to stand further away from him, since she supports Quebec independence.

An IAM member at Ford Electronics in Toronto who is Quebecois bought copies of the pamphlet in both English and French in order to read it herself and show it to others to convince them to support Quebec's fight.

Joe Young in Montreal and Ned Dmytryshyn in Vancouver contributed to this article.

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Why Working People Should Support the Fight for Quebec Independence

An article from the *Militant*

By John Steele

The struggle of the Quebecois for independence, justice, and equality has mobilized thousands of workers and youth against the Canadian imperialist state, cutting across the national divisions imposed by the bosses. This struggle is an integral part of the fight to replace capitalist political power in Ottawa with a workers and farmers government, Steel explains.

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